Bengaluru Friday, May 1, 2026 Pages 20 Vol 79 No 120 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Titans hand RCB a 4-wicket loss

Home batters complete job after Rashid & Holder restrict champs to 155

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Nation

Mamata raises strongroom alarm, goes for inspection

P.10

Nation

India, Italy boost defence ties; to co-produce military hardware

P.11

World

Return Koh-i-Noor: Mamdani to King Charles P.13

Business

Hindustan Unilever Ltd Q4 net up 21% P.14

Quickly

K'taka plans 1,000 MW data centre parks

The state government decided Thursday to establish three 'sustainable' data parks at Bengaluru, Mysuru and Mangaluru with a combined capacity of 1,000 megawatts. In March, the government announced a review of its policy on data centres amid concerns over huge environmental costs, particularly their water and energy needs. Karnataka already has 32 data centres.

Details on Page 4

Crude oil futures hit record Rs 10,571

Crude oil prices jumped by Rs 445 to hit a record Rs 10,571 per barrel in futures trade on Thursday, with Brent breaching $126 a barrel. On the Multi-Commodity Exchange, crude oil for May delivery jumped by Rs 445, or 4.39%, to touch a fresh high of Rs 10,571 per barrel, extending gains for the fourth straight session. Globally, Brent oil futures for the June contract extended its gains for the ninth consecutive session, rising by $4.73, or 3.89%, to hit an intra-day high of $126.41 per barrel.

Details on Page 14

Amend law to allow abortion for rape survivors: SC

Tells Centre that a minor can't be forced to bear pregnancy

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Court observations

Law needs to be organic and in sync with evolving time

- Child rape survivor will have a lifelong scar and trauma if pregnancy termination is not allowed
- In cases of child rape, the choice to bear or terminate pregnancy should always be with the survivor

Warns Centre and AIIMS of contempt charges if its April 24 order, directing medical termination of pregnancy, was not complied with by May 4

"There are children for adoption. In this country, we have a lot of sympathies. There are deserted, abandoned children on the streets and even mafia on it. We have to look at them. This is an unwanted pregnancy of a 15-year-old child - **SUPREME COURT**

The Supreme Court on Thursday declined to consider a curative plea of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, to set aside its order allowing a 15-year-old girl to medically terminate her 30-week pregnancy, and asked the Centre to consider amending the law to permit rape survivors to terminate unwanted pregnancies even beyond 20 weeks.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said that when there is a pregnancy due to rape, there should not be a time limit.

"Law needs to be organic and in sync with evolving time," the bench emphasised as Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati for the AIIMS, New Delhi, made the urgent mentioning stating that the termination of pregnancy is not possible.

The court pointed out that this is a case of child rape and the survivor will have a lifelong scar and trauma if termination is not allowed.

It said that if the mother does not have permanent disability, then it should be carried out.

The court warned the Centre and AIIMS of initiation of contempt charges against them, if its April 24 order, directing medical termination of the pregnancy was not complied with by May 4.

The bench asked AIIMS to counsel the survivor's parents on the issue and stated that the decision must be made by the person concerned.

"There are children for adoption. In this country, we have a lot of sympathies. There are deserted, abandoned children on the streets and even mafia on it. We have to look at them. This is an unwanted pregnancy of a 15-year-old child," the bench said.

Underscoring that unwanted pregnancy cannot be thrust on a person, the bench said, "Imagine she is a child. She should be studying now. But we want to make her a mother. Imagine the pain, the humiliation the child has suffered in this."

At the outset, Bhati, appearing for AIIMS, said, "It will be a live baby with severe deformities. A minor mother will have lifelong health issues and cannot reproduce. This child can be given for adoption. It has been 30 weeks now. It is a viable life now."

The court said the decision on termination has to be a choice of the survivor and her parents and AIIMS may help them take an informed decision.

On April 24, the apex court had allowed the girl to medically terminate her pregnancy.

▸ Pregnancy, Page 10

NICE compensation: SC sets aside HC order, Page 7

Court orders test of Biren's audio clip

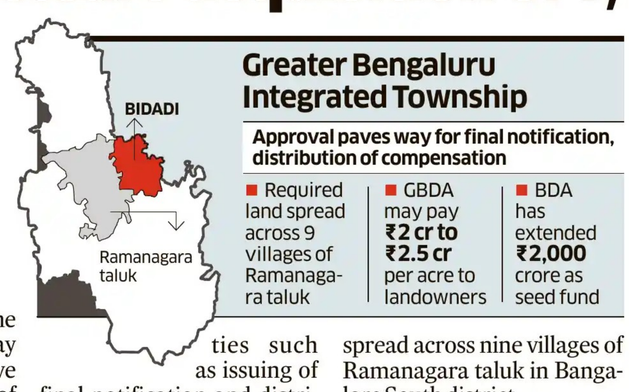
The Supreme Court on Thursday directed for an examination of an audio clip allegedly linking former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh to the ethnic violence in the northeastern state by the National Forensic Sciences University in Gujarat.

Details on Page 12

Rs 18k-cr Bidadi township moves ahead as Cabinet clears acquisition of 7,400 acres

Aims to decongest B'luru, redirect development

BENGALURU, DHNS


BIDADI
Ramanagara taluk
Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township
Approval paves way for final notification, distribution of compensation
Required land spread across 9 villages of Ramanagara taluk
GBDA may pay ₹2 cr to ₹2.5 cr per acre to landowners
BDA has extended ₹2,000 crore as seed fund

In a major development, the state Cabinet on Thursday accorded administrative approval for the creation of Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township in Bidadi, empowering the Greater Bengaluru Development Authority (GBDA) to take over more than 7,400 acres of land for the mixed-use township.

The Cabinet approval paves the way for critical formalities such as issuing of final notification and distribution of compensation that are prerequisite to start the groundwork.

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said the government has approved the acquisition of 7,481 acres spread across nine villages of Ramanagara taluk in Bangalore South district.

The project, estimated to cost Rs 18,104 crore, is being spearheaded by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who holds the Bangalore Development portfolio, even as his arch political rival and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy has been strongly opposing the acquisition of "fertile" farmland.

A part of the township has been earmarked for the development of an 'AI city'.

While the project will be implemented by the GBDA, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has extended a sum of Rs 2,000 crore as seed fund.

Shivakumar's brother and former MP, DK Suresh, is a member of the GBDA, which is a new entity that reports to the Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) and Deputy CM Shivakumar.

The project is seen as an attempt to decongest Bengaluru by building a new satellite town.

▸ Bidadi, Page 7

Cap on CS seats after GO: Sudhakar

BENGALURU, DHNS: Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar on Thursday said that seats in Computer Science (CS) and allied subjects that were already enhanced before a Government Order (GO) is issued will not be disturbed.

Sharing details on the recommendations of the expert committee on 'Reforms in Technical Education', headed by former director of IIIT-B S Sadagopan, which recommended a maximum intake of 900 for all CS and allied subjects, Dr Sudhakar said, "The recommendations of the committee will be applicable to those seeking enhancement in seats after the GO is issued." The seats already enhanced will not be disturbed, he added.

However, the government has instructed the private engineering colleges and the universities to get the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) certificate within two years from the date the GO is issued.

▸ Cap on CS seats, Page 7

KHARGE ON CM CHOICE

'Sonia Gandhi takes our decisions'

AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday said there was no change of CM in Karnataka "for now". Responding to a question on him becoming the CM, Kharge said that Sonia Gandhi takes decisions in the party and she will decide his fate.

P 6

Iran threatens 'painful response' if US resumes attacks

WASHINGTON / DUBAI, REUTERS: Iran said on Thursday it would respond with "long and painful strikes" on US positions if Washington renewed attacks, and also reasserted its control over the Strait of Hormuz, complicating US plans for a coalition to reopen the waterway.

Efforts to resolve the conflict have hit an impasse, with a ceasefire in place since April 8 but Iran still blocking the strait in response to a US blockade of Iran's oil exports.

US President Donald Trump is slated to receive a briefing on Thursday on plans for a series of fresh strikes on Iran to compel it to negotiate an end to the conflict, a US official told *Reuters*. Such options have long been part of US planning but the proposed briefing spurred big gains in oil prices.

"Foreigners who come from thousands of kilometres away...have no place there (Strait of Hormuz) except at the bottom of its waters.

MOJTABA KHAMENEI, Iran's Supreme Leader

Any US attack on Iran, even if limited, will usher in "long and painful strikes" on US regional positions, a senior Revolutionary Guards official said. "We've seen what happened to your regional bases, we will see the same thing happen to your warships," Aerospace Force Commander Majid Mousavi said.

▸ Iran, Page 7

Lokayukta to book chief secy, GBA chief over wall collapse

BENGALURU, DHNS: A day after the Bowring Hospital wall collapse that killed seven people, the Lokayukta on Thursday decided to register a suo motu case against senior government officials, including Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao, the DCP of East police division, BESCOM officials, traffic police officers and jurisdictional police, for their alleged negligence.

After visiting the accident location, Lokayukta Justice B S Patil said the commissioners of five city corporations, the commissioner and additional chief secretary of the medical education department and other senior officials linked to city administration will be made parties in the case. "All of them will be made parties and the case will proceed and I have all the official details."

Lokayukta Justice B S Patil inspects the site of wall collapse in Shivajinagar on Thursday.

Speaking to *DH*, Justice Patil said a preliminary inspection indicated a weak foundation could have led to the collapse, and negligence is to be blamed for the mishap.

▸ Lokayukta, Page 7

Rain damages: Reports on Pages 2 & 3A

भारत की जनगणना 2027 CENSUS OF INDIA जनगणना से जन कल्याण

Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India सत्यमेव जयते

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OUR DEVELOPMENT

First phase of Census 2027

Houselisting and Housing Census

From April 16th to May 15th, 2026

In this phase, details of every house in your area will be recorded

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Information related to house	Basic information about family	Basic Features	Household Amenities
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• This stage lays the foundation for Population Enumeration to be conducted in February 2027
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• All your information will remain completely confidential and secure

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with enumerators during their household visits for this National Exercise

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PAY AND DRIVE

Two of Bengaluru's 11 new flyovers to be tolled

DH SPECIAL

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

Two of the 11 elevated corridor projects recently approved by the state government for Bengaluru will be tolled, with official documents showing that these two stretches, the longest among the lot, are proposed under Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM). Once completed, they will become the city's first major intra-city flyovers — spanning a combined 46.5 km and estimated to cost Rs 7,577 crore — to operate on a user-fee basis.

The documents classify the two projects under Category-C, to be taken up with 40% Viability Gap Funding (VGF). Under this framework, a private concessionaire finances part of the project, builds and maintains it, while the government will provide Rs 2,796 crore.

Big and long roads ahead

CORRIDOR -1
ROUTE: From Yeshwanthpura to Old Madras Road (Tin Factory Junction) via IISc, Mekhri Circle, Jayamahal, St John's Church Road & Ulsoor Lake
28 km Length
₹4,621.45 cr Cost

CORRIDOR - 2
ROUTE: Marenahalli Main Road (Ragigudda Junction) to Kanakapura Main Road (Thalaghattapura Junction) via the BWSSB Pipeline Road corridor
18.5 km Length
₹2,956.32 cr Cost

The government has adopted a similar approach to fund the ambitious tunnel road project.

The first of the two corridors is a 28-km elevated road from Yeshwanthpura to Old Madras Road (Tin Factory Junction) via IISc, Mekhri Circle, Jayamahal, St John's Church Road and Ulsoor Lake. Designed as a six-lane carriageway, the project is estimated at Rs 4,621.45 crore, including the cost of land acquisition and contingencies.

The second is an 18.5-km elevated corridor from Marenahalli Main Road (Ragigudda Junction) to Kanakapura Main Road (Thalaghattapura Junction). This stretch is estimated to cost 2,956.32 crore. Together, the two projects account for more than half of the total outlay of Rs 13,262 crore for the 11 corridors.

▸ Corridors, Page 7

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ALICE FLORA D'CRUZ
96.50%

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PHYSICS
- MANYA GUPTA 98
- SAMAH SHARIQ 98

BIOLOGY
- SAMAH SHARIQ 97

CHEMISTRY
- MANYA GUPTA 99

COMPUTER SCIENCE
- K TANMAYEE 98
- THANUSHREE N 98

MATHEMATICS
- MANYA GUPTA 99

ECONOMICS
- AAROHI PRASANNA OKE 100

COMMERCE
- ABISHEK PAUL J 96

ACCOUNTS
- ALICE FLORA D'CRUZ 99

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- AAROHI PRASANNA OKE 99

BUSINESS STUDIES
- ALICE FLORA D'CRUZ 98
- ABISHEK PAUL J 98

SOCIOLOGY
- MYTHRI BHATT 100
- SHIRINAA PUTTY 100
- SRINITHI NARAYANAN KONNAYAR 100

ELECTIVE ENGLISH
- ESTHER JOANNA XAVIER 99

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- DAKSH KATTEMAR 100

ART
- AAROHI PRASANNA OKE 100

HOME SCIENCE
- SAANVI ABROL 99

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Was Wednesday's rain ordeal just the beginning?

Rainwater forces its way into over 100 homes

BENGALURU, DHNS

For many residents in Bengaluru, rains come with grief.

On Wednesday, following a heavy downpour, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) received over 100 complaints of floodwater breaching homes across different parts of the city. Residents expressed anger, saying their earlier pleas to authorities — made well before the rains — had fallen on deaf ears.

With more rain forecast, hundreds of families are left wondering if Wednesday's ordeal is just the beginning.

A majority of the complaints about water entering homes came from the Chamarajpet Assembly constituency in the Bengaluru Central City Corporation. Most of the affected houses belonged to economically weaker sections of society.

In South Bengaluru, rainwater entered several homes due to the blockage of a stormwater drain near RV Teachers College in Kanakanapalya, Jayanagar.

The intensity of the rain was such that several underpasses, including KR Circle, Madiwala, Jayadeva, Shankaranagar, and Nayandahalli, were flooded, resembling stormwater drains.

Meanwhile, GBA officials said helpline numbers have been kept open round the clock as residents continue to report distress.

A night on the road

At least 750 houses across city slums were flooded after heavy rains on Wednesday evening, leaving many residents with no option but to spend the night out on the roads.

"There are children and we do not know what to do now. All our household items, including groceries, are spoiled. None of the authorities have looked at our situation. We hope to get some help soon," said Rani, a resident of Bangi Colony, where at least 180 houses have been affected.

Volunteers working with slum residents said at least 300 houses were affected in Vinobha Nagar and 130 in Narasimhaiah Colony near Mysuru Road. "There are many more houses and people affected. We are not able to assess the situation now," said Jancy from Slum Mahila Sanghatane.

Residents alleged they had been flagging such issues to the authorities for years.

"There is hardly any response from the authorities. Every time it rains, we are left on the road," said a resident of Jolly Mohalla. The residents urged authorities to open community halls and government schools during the rainy season to shelter those whose houses are affected.

A car stuck in rainwater on a road near Palace Guttahalli on Wednesday. DH PHOTO/MS MANJUNATH

RANI, a resident of a colony
(where at least 180 houses have been affected)

"There are children and we do not know what to do now. All our household items, including groceries, are spoiled. None of the authorities have looked at our situation. We hope to get some help soon.

Hailstorm breaches HC

BENGALURU, DHNS: The hailstorm that lashed the city on Wednesday evening breached the High Court of Karnataka, damaging the chamber of the Advocate General (AG) of Karnataka and triggering an internet shutdown after 6 pm.

Rainwater gushed into the AG's chamber through the roof, next to an air-conditioner duct, damaging electrical and electronic devices and drenching documents. Staff and advocates scrambled to shift the documents and valuables to safety. The false ceiling in the chamber was also damaged.

Leakages were reported in the chambers of a few judges and several other departments in the court premises. Rainwater also gushed into the cubicles of government advocates located close to the AG's office.

The Bengaluru Advocates' Association said the cause list for April 30 could not be updated after 6 pm on Wednesday due to the internet shutdown. The association requested the Chief Justice not to take up cases owing to the incomplete cause list.

April 2026: A month of sharp weather swings for Bengaluru

Above-normal temperatures for 29 days, over a month's rain in just a few hrs

BENGALURU, DHNS

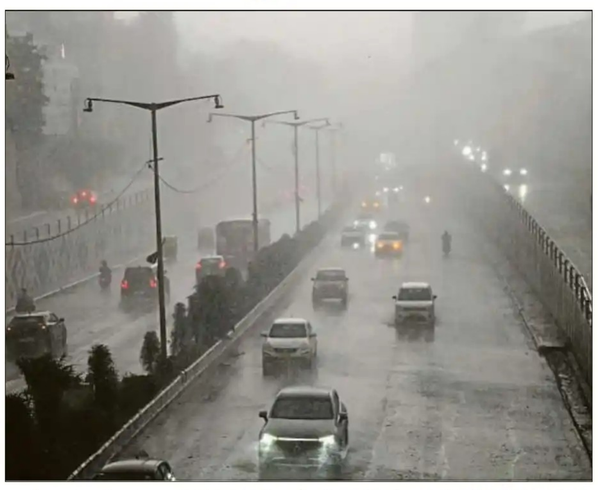
April 2026 will go down in history as a month of sharp weather swings for Bengaluru, according to a review of data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

It was an unusually hot and humid month.

The Bengaluru city observatory recorded an average maximum temperature of 35.19°C, compared to the long-term average of 34.1°C. The average minimum temperature also stayed high: 23.55°C, compared to the long-term average of 22.1°C, shows IMD data compiled by Bengaluru Weather.

But on April 29, records of the other extreme were also written.

According to the IMD data, the Bengaluru City observatory recorded 111.5 mm of rainfall in the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am on April 30, making it the wettest April day on record, surpassing the previous high of 108.6 mm on April 19, 2001. Of the 113 mm rainfall recorded this month, 111.5 mm fell within this 24-hour period. The monthly average is just 61.7 mm.



Commuters push through wind and rain on Ballari Road. DH PHOTO/MS MANJUNATH

Data from the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre's (KSNDMC) automatic weather stations shows sharp spatial variation. The Bengaluru Urban automatic weather station recorded 102 mm of rainfall, Sampangiramanagar 92 mm, Cottonpet 78 mm, and Chamarajpet 77 mm.

Wednesday evening's hailstorm also led to a sharp drop in temperatures, with the minimum falling to 18.2°C, 4.3°C below normal. The maximum temperature, however, remained about 1°C above normal at 35°C, indicating strong daytime heating despite the evening storm, according to the IMD.

The hailstorm was largely concentrated within the city's core areas. The HAL Airport observatory, representative of eastern and southeastern areas, recorded only 34.2 mm of rainfall with little or no hail. In the north and northeast, it was even less. The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) observatory recorded 13 mm and GKVK just 8 mm.

There was also little change in temperatures in these areas, with HAL Airport recording a maximum of 34.1°C and a minimum of 21.6°C, roughly on a par with normal.

For May 1, the IMD has issued a yellow alert for Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural and Ramanagar, forecasting heavy rainfall in some areas and a thunderstorm with hail in others.

A partly cloudy sky with light to moderate rain/thundershowers with gusty winds speed (30-40 kmph) is expected at isolated places.

Maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to be around 35°C and 21°C, respectively.

Security guard killed after brick crashes onto house during heavy rain

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 35-year-old security guard died after a brick from a neighbouring building crashed onto his house during heavy rain on Wednesday night on Kasturba Road in Chamarajpet.

The deceased, Manjunath, had returned from duty and was sleeping on the bed on the second floor when the brick fell from the adjacent building.

He was alone at home, as his wife and son had gone to their native place in Bengaluru Rural for a function. The incident went unnoticed due to the rain.

A neighbour later noticed the damage, entered the house, and found Manjunath dead.

Police were alerted and the body was shifted for postmortem.

Based on a complaint by his wife, Chamarajpet police registered a case under Section 106 (causing death by negligence) against the neighbouring property owner.

Further investigation is underway.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Readers rally behind Church Street bookstore following flood

DISHA S
BENGALURU, DHNS

A day after heavy rains and a hailstorm battered Bengaluru, readers, netizens and loyal visitors of The Bookworm on Church Street came out in support of the flood-hit store.

The iconic independent bookstore saw 4,000 to 5,000 books, worth lakhs, damaged in the flooding on Wednesday.

Proprietor Krishna Gowda told *DH* that damaged titles include the 'Asterix and Obelix' series, 'Elon Musk' by Walter Isaacson, Roopa Pai's 'Cubbon Park: The Green Heart of Bengaluru', and the 'Percy Jackson & the Olympians' series by Rick Riordan.

As the store posted an update on its social media handles, readers and well-wishers immediately offered help through donations and book drives.

On its Instagram post, a user commented, "Now is the time for the reading community to show up for our beloved @thebookworm_blr," as others echoed the sentiment. Some comments suggested a wet book fair, where readers sell or donate books to cover the losses.

"Reading community, if you buy one of the soiled books and bring a friend to buy another, not only will they recover from their loss, everyone who reads them will also turn a little wiser. Please help this bookstore! #cometogether," a user wrote.

On X, users urged people to purchase from the store once it was ready.

"Today's storm got the city's beloved @bookworm_Kris bad with over 5,000 books bearing the brunt. Running a bookstore in 2026 is brave, selfless and everything in between. So, when Bookworm is ready to sell again, GO and buy a book, or two," a post read.

Krishna said the store was overwhelmed by the response and was considering a book fair for the damaged copies. "It was unexpected. People from the book industry are also helping me today," he said.

In a post on X, the store thanked patrons for their support. "The words of support and offers to help have been truly overwhelming. We are working to bring the store back to normal, but you can visit at any time or call us on 9845076757," it said.

A worker dries rain-soaked books in the sun following the hailstorm, on Thursday. DH PHOTO/BK JANARDHAN

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CBC-09114-11-0001-2627

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my client is intending to purchase the property bearing Site No.25, Municipal No.89, E-PID No.2002742403, measuring East to West: 120 feet and North to South: 80 feet totally 9,600 square feet, situated at Railway Parallel Road, Kumara Park West, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020, consisting of ground, first and second floor RCC roofed building, which is more fully described in the schedule hereunder and hereinafter called as the "**Schedule Property**" from its owners- **Sri.K.V.Venkataramana S/o K.R.Venkatesalu, Smt.K.Shashikala Prasad W/o K.V.Prasad, Smt.K.Shalini Prasad, D/o K.V.Prasad and Prithvi Prasad S/o K.V.Prasad**, all are residing at No.128, Railway Parallel Road, 1st Block, Behind BDA, Kumara Park West, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560020,

The owners of the Schedule Property have handed over the xerox copies of the title deeds and other related documents in respect of the Schedule Property to my client. Any person/s having any claim, right, title, interest, share in the Schedule Property may file their objections to the undersigned with documentary proof within 21 days from the date of publication of this public notice and if no valid objections are received within stipulated time, my client will proceed with assumptions that, there are no objections or claims of whatsoever nature from any person/s for purchasing the schedule property by my client. Any objection received after 21 days will not be entertained and my client will proceed to purchase the schedule property in accordance with law.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of property bearing Site No.25, Municipal No.89, E-PID No.2002742403, measuring East to West: 120 feet and North to South: 80 feet totally 9,600 square feet, situated at Railway Parallel Road, Kumara Park West, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020, consisting of ground, first and second floor RCC roofed building, & bounded on:
East by : Road,
West by : Private property,
North by : Property bearing No. 129/90,
South by: Property bearing No.127/88.

J.S.Dinesh, Advocate
JSD Law Firm, No.17, 76th 'A' Cross
6th Block, Rajajinagara, Bengaluru-560 010.
Mobile:9448020528, Ph.No.080-23300528
Email:jsdlawfirm25@gmail.com

Bengaluru, Date:30.04.2026

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
VARIOUS WORKS

E-Tender Notice No.: 01-2026-DEN-TRACK-SUR. DRM (W)'s, Central Railway, Solapur on behalf of the president of India Invites E-tender from the reputed firms/Contractor for the following work. **Name of work:** Miscellaneous P.way Work under SSE/P.way/PVR under ADEN/PVR Sub-division for a period of two years. **Approximate cost of work :** ₹ 2,51,85,569.71/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 5,03,700.00/-, **Completion period of the work:** 24(Twenty Four) months. **Maintenance Period:** NIL. Cost of Tender form: NIL. **Date & time for submission for tender on www.ireps.gov.in:** 19.05.2026 up to 15.00 hrs. **Date and time of opening of tender on www.ireps.gov.in:** 19.05.2026 after 15.30 hrs. **Website particulars: www.ireps.gov.in. Note:** The Prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website frequently before the date of closing of tender to note any change/corrigendum issued for this tender website : **www.ireps.gov.in** EXP-15

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SIGNAL & TELECOM WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION

E-Tender No.: SNT-04-LMG-2026-27; Dated: 28-04-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Name of work :** Provision of digital 25W VHF set along with voice logging facility of VHF Radio Communication for Capacity Development on Railway safety in Lumding Division. **Tender Value:** ₹4,71,40,581.78/-; **Bid Security:** ₹9,42,800/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **15:00** hours and **opening** at **15:30** hours on **20-05-2026**.Complete information alongwith the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

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CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
SIGNALLING WORK

Tender Notice No. SUR-N-T-2026-27-05 Date : 28.04.2026. DRM(S&T)'s Office, Central Railway, Solapur for and on behalf of President of India Invites online e-tenders on Railway's e-procurement website **www.ireps.gov.in** from the capable, reputed firms/Contractors for the following works: **Tender No.:** SUR-N-T-2026-27-05. **Name of work with its locality:** Signalling work in connection with CTR, TRR, TTR, TSR, TFTR, TBR and TWR related works in Solapur Division of Central Railway. **Approximate Cost of the work:** ₹ 1,29,44,874.19. **Earnest money to be deposited:** ₹2,58,900. **Cost of the tender form:** Nil. **Completion period of the work:** 12 Months. **Date & Time of Closing of tender:** 22.05.2026 after 15.30 Hrs. The details are available in Ireps website. Corrigendum/amendments if any will be uploaded only on above e-procurement website. Only online tenders will be accepted. Manual/postal/e-mail, FAX, by hand tenders will not be accepted. Bidders are requested to obtain Class III Digital Signature Certificate with company name and register the same with **www.ireps.gov.in** The Payment of Earnest Money (EMD) will be accepted through net banking or payment gateway or in the form of Bank Guarantee and the original Bank Guarantee should be delivered in person to the official nominated as indicated in the tender document before closing date for submission of bids (i.e. excluding the last date of submission of bids). For further details please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**. EXP-19

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CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
SIGNALLING WORK

Tender Notice No. SUR-N-T-2026-27-06 Date : 28.04.2026. DRM(S&T)'s Office, Central Railway, Solapur for and on behalf of President of India Invites online e-tenders on Railway's e-procurement website **www.ireps.gov.in** from the capable, reputed firms/Contractors for the following works: **Tender No.:** SUR-N-T-2026-27-06. **Name of work with its locality:** Signalling work in connection with "Provision of additional two loop lines & provision of Shunting neck and A&D siding at Boribial station of Solapur Division of Central Railway." **Approximate Cost of the work:** ₹ 8,63,96,839.46. **Earnest money to be deposited:** ₹17,27,900. **Cost of the tender form:** Nil. **Completion period of the work:** 12 Months. **Date & Time of Closing of tender:** 22.05.2026 after 15.30 Hrs. The details are available in Ireps website. Corrigendum/amendments if any will be uploaded only on above e-procurement website. Only online tenders will be accepted. Manual/postal/e-mail, FAX, by hand tenders will not be accepted. Bidders are requested to obtain Class III Digital Signature Certificate with company name and register the same with **www.ireps.gov.in** The Payment of Earnest Money (EMD) will be accepted through net banking or payment gateway or in the form of Bank Guarantee and the original Bank Guarantee should be delivered in person to the official nominated as indicated in the tender document before closing date for submission of bids (i.e. excluding the last date of submission of bids). For further details please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**. EXP-18

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◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Karnataka Workers Union: Labour Day celebrations; Bannappa Park; 10 am.

Department of Kannada and Culture: Buddha Jayanti; Siddaramaiah and others; Nagasena Buddha Vihar premises, Sadashivanagar; 10.30 am.

Voice of Sadashivangar: 'Save Sankey Tank' programme and thanking the civic workers; Sankey Tank, Sadashivanagar; 7 am.

CULTURAL

Kadumalleshwara Geleyara Balaga: Celebrating BV Karanat's theatre music; Kadumalleshwara Open-air Theatre, Malleswaram; 6.30 pm.

Sangeeta M Vali and Madhu B Vali: Bharatanatya Rangapravesha by Aditri M Vali; Samarthanam Hall, HSR Layout; 4 pm.

Indian Institute of World Culture: GB Harish to speak on 'Buddha in Kannada Literature'; Institute premises, Basavanagudi; 6 pm.

RELIGIOUS

BASV (Nagarta) Samiti: Annapoornamba Nagareshwaraswamy Brahmarathotsava and day-long special pujas; Temple premises, Nagartapete; 7 am.

Dharamaraya Swamy Perumal Devasthana Trust: Agnigunda and Karaga utsav; Temple premises, Kalasipalya; 7.30 am.

10-day Indian Artisans Haat kicks off today

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Indian Artisans Haat (TIAH), a first-of-a-kind artisans exhibition celebrating India's rich tradition of handlooms, handicrafts, artefacts, antiques, handmade and sustainable products, will be held at Jayamahal Palace Hotel from May 1 to 10 between 10.30 am and 8.30 pm.

"The Indian Artisan' Haat will be the biggest artisans' expo in Bengaluru where over 150 master artisans from across India will showcase handlooms, handicrafts, artefacts and handmade crafts," TIAH founders Nagaraj Hundekar and Ahmed Khan told *DH*.

The event will provide a platform for artisans to exhibit, promote and sell authentic handmade products. It will also create a vibrant, festive atmosphere with live product demonstrations, handloom fashion shows, cultural performances, and entertainment and food counters serving delicacies from various parts of India. Rajasthani folk singer Ustad Lateef Khan will perform for all 10 days. Channapatna toys, Surpur lime art paintings and terracotta jewellery will be among the products from Karnataka featured at the expo.

For details, call 9880331685, 9886507007 or 9972670107.

VA held taking Rs 2 lakh bribe

BENGALURU, DHNS: A village accountant posted at Begur Nada Kacheri in Bengaluru South was caught red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 2 lakh in a trap laid by the Karnataka Lokayukta police.

The accused, Manjunath, had allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 10 lakh from Chetan S, a resident of Mangammanapalya, for facilitating a pending phodi/khata transfer work.

Following the complaint, Lokayukta officials laid a trap and caught the accused while accepting part of the bribe amount.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Rain or thundershowers would occur towards afternoon or evening

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	35°C
Minimum	21°C
Rainfall	111mm
Humidity	77%
Sunset (April 30)	6:34 pm
Sunrise (May 01)	6:00 am
Moonrise	5:31 pm
Moonset	4:45 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

DH
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OUR TOPPERS

NIRMAL NAIR 98.60% | SHRADDHA SHAILESH KAWALE 97.80% | HARSH S SHETTY 97.60% | DAIVIK M 97.60% | MYTHRI AMIT YELSANGIKAR 97.60%

SUBJECT TOPPERS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ABHINAV NANDI REDDY 98
- ANINDITA SEN 98
- HARSH S SHETTY 98
- J S ANSHIKA 98
- JOYCE DEVENDRA NAIDU 98
- RISHITH SUJEET 98
- SHERYL EBENEZER 98

ENGLISH LITERATURE
- ANINDITA SEN 100
- CAROL ANGELA FERNANDEZ 100
- DAIVIK M 100
- JOYCE DEVENDRA NAIDU 100
- LAKSHITA APPAIAH 100
- PRANAV SUHAS MARADANI 100
- SHERYL EBENEZER 100
- TANAAZ SUJEEL 100

KANNADA
- SHUDDHI MAHESH 99

HISTORY & CIVICS
- MYTHRI AMIT YELSANGIKAR 100
- NIRMAL NAIR 100
- PRANAV SUHAS MARADANI 100
- SNEHA RAJASEKAR 100

HINDI
- PUNEETH N PATEL 98
- SHRADDHA SHAILESH KAWALE 98

FRENCH
- SIDDHARTHA PANDEY 92

GEOGRAPHY
- MYTHRI AMIT YELSANGIKAR 99

MATHEMATICS
- ETHAN JOHN ZACHARIAH 100
- NIPUN M 100

ECONOMICS
- ZARA LILIAN IYPE 97

PHYSICS
- DAIVIK M 94

CHEMISTRY
- AADI KUMAR MODI 100
- DAIVIK M 100
- SHERYL EBENEZER 100

BIOLOGY
- SHUDDHI MAHESH 100

COMMERCIAL STUDIES
- NIRMAL NAIR 99
- VAIBHAV M 99

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS
- ADITYA NIRAN 100
- DAIVIK M 100
- LIKHITH S 100
- PRANAV SUHAS MARADANI 100

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- ETHAN JOHN ZACHARIAH 100

ART
- J S ANSHIKA 100
- MANNA ELIZABETH ALEX 100
- POOJARIRA DEEPAK RUCHI MUTHANNA 100
- UNMITHA S A 100

WESTERN MUSIC
- SHERYL EBENEZER 97

DRAMA
- MYTHRI AMIT YELSANGIKAR 100
- NIRMAL NAIR 100
- ZARA LILIAN IYPE 100

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SUBJECT TOPPERS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ANANYA MISHRA 99
- CHRISTINA JOY 99
- HIMANK SONI 99
- JUDE THOMAS MEKAT 99
- MRINMAYI BASU 99
- MUNAZZA FATEMA 99
- PREETHI M 99
- SHRAVYA KANCHAN 99
- SHUVAN KAR 99
- SRIMATHI RAJENDRA 99
- SUCHETONA GHOSH 99
- VIJAYAVIGNESH ARUN KUMAR 99

ENGLISH LITERATURE
- JANAV PRASHANTH 100
- JOEL JOSEPH JOYCE 100

HINDI
- MUNAZZA FATEMA 99

GEOGRAPHY
- DHANVIN POTHINENI 100

MATHEMATICS
- CHRISTINA JOY 100

PHYSICS
- CHRISTINA JOY 99

KANNADA
- N M RAJSHRI 96

FRENCH
- JOEL JOSEPH JOYCE 86

ECONOMICS
- MANNA GRACE SHIMRAY 97
- SARAYU KANDADA 97

HISTORY & CIVICS
- A PRATHIK 100
- ANANYA MISHRA 100
- DARSH PODDAR 100
- DHANVIN POTHINENI 100
- HIMANK SONI 100
- MRINMAYI BASU 100
- MUNAZZA FATEMA 100
- ROHIT SHAILEN PANDYA 100

CHEMISTRY
- A PRATHIK 100
- CHRISTINA JOY 100
- HIMANK SONI 100
- MRINMAYI BASU 100
- MUNAZZA FATEMA 100
- SAMARAH ANOOP VARGHESE 100

ART
- AASHIMA MAHESHWARI 100
- ANIA AUGUSTINE 100
- MRINMAYI BASU 100
- SAMARAH ANOOP VARGHESE 100
- SHRAVYA KANCHAN 100
- SUCHETONA GHOSH 100

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS
- AKSHATHA A 100
- CHRISTINA JOY 100
- ESHWAR DHRUVA KUMAR 100
- EVELYN ROSE DENNIS 100
- HIMANK SONI 100

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- DHANVIN POTHINENI 99

WESTERN MUSIC
- JOEL JOSEPH JOYCE 99

BIOLOGY
- A PRATHIK 100
- CHRISTINA JOY 100
- DARSH PODDAR 100
- DHANVIN POTHINENI 100
- HIMANK SONI 100

COMMERCIAL STUDIES
- AALIYAH VIVIAN 99
- SREYASH MUKHERJEE 99

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Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Greater Bengaluru Authority

Bengaluru City Corporations

North • South • East • West • Central

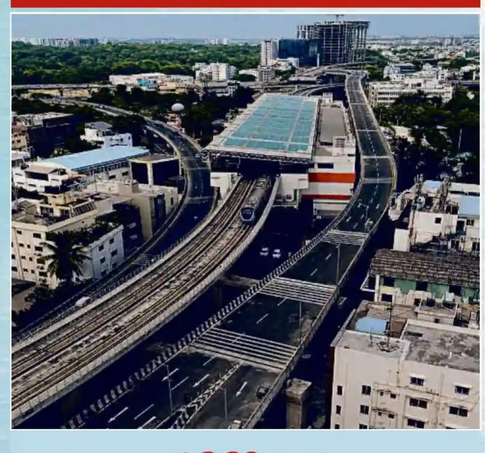
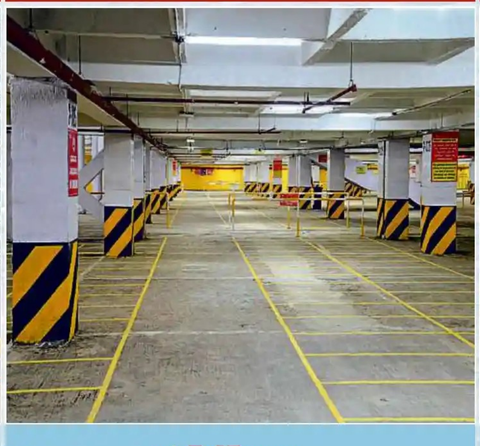
Sri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
& Bengaluru City Development Minister

The Foundation Stone Laying and Inauguration of Development works by the GBA and BMRCL

by Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister & Bengaluru City Development Minister

Sri D.K. Shivakumar

Date: 01.05.2026, Friday

Ragigudda - Central Silk Board Rail-cum-double-decker road flyover	Skywalk Construction work at Banashankari Junction	Inauguration of Commercial Complex and Multi-storey Car Parking in Gandhi Bazaar	Inauguration of the Vehicle Parking Complex on the ground floor of K.R. Market building	Inauguration of Dynamic lighting system on Metro Pillars
				
at 3.30 p.m. **H.S.R. LAYOUT - Ramp Entrance** • Total Cost **Rs. 499 crores** • 5.12 kms Length • Signal Free Corridor	**at. 4.15 p.m.** **BMTC Bus Stand, Banashankari** • A Captivating Model of the Banashankari Skywalk • Facilitate pedestrian and vehicle traffic	**at 5.00 p.m.** **Gandhi Bazaar Road** • Cost : **Rs. 22 Crores** • 6-storey Commercial Complex • Multi-storey Parking Facility • 51 shops and 24x7 parking facility for 128 LMV four wheelers	**at 5.45 p.m.** **K.R. Market** • **10,000 sq m** Area • 24x7 parking facility for 200 cars and 400 two-wheelers • Separate parking arrangements for women, senior citizens and the specially abled • Real-time parking information through digital displays, web portals and mobile apps	**at 6.45 p.m.** **M.G. Road Metro Station** • Total Cost : **Rs. 3.08 Crores** • Beautification of M.G. Road metro pillars • In the first phase, between Trinity and Anil Kumble Circle on M.G. Road • 160 metro pillars in next phases

OUR KARNATAKA
GUARANTEE KARNATAKA

ಶಕ್ತಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಬಸ್ ಪ್ರಯಾಣ ಉಚಿತ | ಅನ್ನಭಾಗ್ಯ ಪ್ರತಿ ತಿಂಗಳು 10 kg | ಗೃಹ ಜ್ಯೋತಿ ಪ್ರತಿ ಮನೆಗೆ 200 ಯೂನಿಟ್‌ವರೆಗೆ ಉಚಿತ | ಗೃಹಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಿ ₹2000 | ಯುವನಿಧಿ ₹3000 | ₹1500

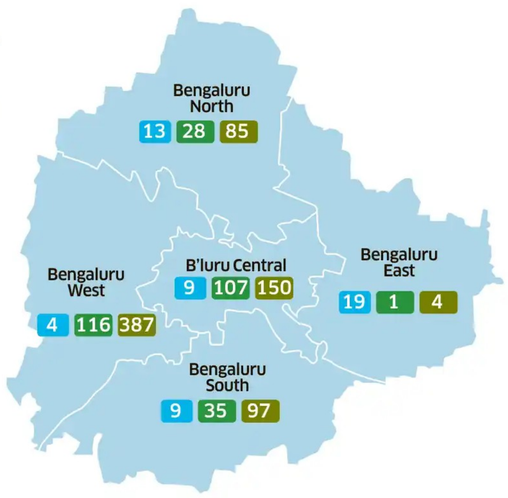
As is enshrined in our constitution "to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture" - is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.

Scale of damage

Waterlogged complaints: 54

Trees uprooted: 287

Branches fallen: 723



Bescom data

An initial assessment by the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) put the damage at 186 electric poles, 38 transformers and approximately 0.9 km of power lines, with total losses estimated at Rs 50.52 lakh.

Rs 5 lakh each to families of victims

The Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) on Thursday distributed cheques of Rs 5 lakh each as compensation to the families of seven victims who lost their lives in the compound wall collapse behind Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital in Shivajinagar.

The KR Circle underpass inundated again after heavy rains, despite recent anti-waterlogging upgrades. DH PHOTOS/PUSHKAR V

Lokayukta inspects KR Circle underpass

The Lokayukta inspected the waterlogged KR Circle underpass and warned of action against officials responsible for the lapse. Lokayukta Justice BS Patil directed the immediate clearing of water and garbage and assured a permanent solution after identifying the cause of the recurring flooding. He added that summons will be issued to the officials concerned, and strict legal action will follow after the inquiry.

7 WHO DIED IN THE BOWRING WALL COLLAPSE HAS LEFT BEHIND FAMILIES STILL SEARCHING FOR WORDS

A birthday dress, a sheltering umbrella... and a wall that did not hold

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Emergency Department of Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital wore a gloomy look on Thursday, its corridors heavy with grief and the anxious faces of families waiting for news.

Mubeen Taj, 49, injured in Wednesday's wall collapse, cried out when she learnt that her six-year-old granddaughter Musaveer Begum was among the seven who died. She refused treatment and pulled out her IV drip.

The girl was to turn seven on May 3. She had come to Shivajinagar with her family to shop for a birthday dress.

Mubeen's younger sister Jabeen Taj, 47, was also injured, sustaining wounds to the neck, hip and legs.

"The girl was very excited for her birthday and wanted to buy a dress. While they were shopping, it started to rain, so they took shelter under an umbrella put up by the footpath vendors. Moments later, the wall collapsed on them," said Shehnaz Begum, a relative.

Mohammed Musabbar, whose brother Mohammed Salahuddin Ansari (36) died in the collapse, said his brother had come to the city a few years ago looking for work and set up a stall on the footpath. "This unfortunate incident has taken him away from us," he said.

Ruhul Alam, brother of 19-year-old Nasimulla, another victim, said the young man had come from Assam seeking work and had been in the city for nearly a year.

Family members said Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad had arranged their travel and helped carry the bodies back home.

Ajaz Ahmed, a vendor caring for fellow injured vendors, said Azzu, one of the injured victims, was suffering from a septum fracture and had received stitches to his forehead.

Mohammed Sajid had chest pain and rib fractures.

Inspection of all hospital buildings

Minister for Medical Education Dr Sharanprakash R Patil has directed officials to inspect all hospital buildings and compound walls under the department's jurisdiction and submit a detailed report.

The vendor who stayed home

Nasir Ahmed, who usually sets up his stall at the spot where the wall fell, had skipped Wednesday. "I recently stopped coming daily as I am getting old. Other vendors asked me to come every day, or they would give my spot to someone else. I came on Monday and Tuesday, but skipped Wednesday as I was not feeling well," he said. His friends came to tell him about the tragedy. "They said I was lucky. But that feeling did not last long because other vendors who were our friends have lost their lives," he said.

Mourning in Kerala town

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: Smitha Raghu and Latha KK, from Ramamangalam on the outskirts of Kochi, were among those killed in the wall collapse.

Both women were active members of a local unit of the Kudumbashree women's empowerment mission in Ramamangalam, and their deaths have deeply shocked the panchayat.

Smitha (47) was a key breadwinner for her family of seven. Latha (57) was unmarried and lived with her mother and brothers.

They worked at a Kudumbashree unit that produces Amrutham Nutrimix, which is supplied to anganwadis.

"The two were actively involved in Kudumbashree activities. Six members from the unit had toured Bengaluru.

"They had hoped to travel by air and had been saving for it from their earnings," a district Kudumbashree official said.

Their bodies will be kept at the panchayat hall to allow the public to pay their last respects.

No arrests yet in Bowring wall collapse; UDR filed

BENGALURU, DHNS

Commercial Street police, probing the Bowring Hospital wall collapse that killed seven people on Wednesday, have registered a case of unnatural death, but say no individual or authority has been held responsible so far.

The UDR was registered on a complaint filed by Mohammed Atif alias Shahan, a cloth vendor. Preliminary investigations indicate neither the hospital authorities nor any officials are currently found culpable.

"No summons have been issued as yet. If the probe reveals the role of any individual or agency, legal action will be initiated and an FIR will follow," a senior police officer said.

Post-mortem was conducted past midnight on a priority basis after families requested early release of the bodies to transport them to their native places in Assam, Bihar and Kerala.

Police and hospital authorities coordinated through the night to complete medico-legal formalities, enabling relatives to catch the earliest available flights.

The wall, about 12-ft high and one-ft thick, gave way around 5.45 pm on Wednesday on MK Street, trapping more than a dozen people. The collapse was triggered by heavy rain and an additional construction load on the decades-old structure.

Seven people, including a six-year-old girl, were killed and nine others injured.

Police and forensic teams at the Bowring Hospital wall-collapse site in Shivajinagar on Thursday, a day after heavy rains killed seven and injured nine others. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Two engineers suspended

BENGALURU, DHNS: The GBA on Thursday suspended executive engineer Mohammed Javed and assistant executive engineer Rudramuni of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation following the collapse of a compound wall behind Bowring Hospital.

The suspension order, issued on April 30, 2026, cites negligence and dereliction of duty, blaming the engineers for failing to ensure the safety of pedestrians who had taken shelter next to the wall during rain. Pending an inquiry, both officers have been suspended with immediate effect.

Over 50 teams deployed to tackle damage

BENGALURU, DHNS: At least 50 teams were deployed on the ground to clear uprooted trees and desilt drains. Of these, 30 teams were assigned exclusively to remove fallen trees and branches brought down by heavy rain and strong winds.

While many residents criticised the lack of pre-monsoon preparedness, senior GBA officials said the situation was triggered by unusually intense rainfall in a short span.

"We were prepared. However, such heavy rain in just 3–4 hours was unexpected and caused problems," a senior GBA official said.

Flood management

- Desilting and rejuvenation of primary and secondary stormwater drains to be taken up on a war footing.
- 173 km of new stormwater drain retaining walls and 83 km of upgradation works under World Bank assistance in progress.
- Culverts to be built at 31 critical locations under NDMF funding.
- Sluice gates to be installed at 127 locations to regulate lake water levels.
- Additional side drains and cross-drainage works to be developed.
- Grated inlets and silt traps to be installed at key points.
- Strict enforcement of pre-monsoon desilting schedules.
- Dedicated teams deployed in high-vulnerability areas.

Fallen giants

An uprooted tree fell on a parked car, damaging it and narrowly missing a nearby house. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Wednesday's hailstorm caused widespread disruption across Bengaluru, with a branch and streetlight pole falling onto the road in Sadashivanagar, a tree and streetlight pole collapsing in Malleswaram, and a broken branch blocking a main road in Kumara Krupa. DH PHOTOS/BK JANARDHAN

No vendor to sit near dangerous walls: DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday directed officials to remove street vendors sitting close to weak compound walls across the city.

"The officials have already started identifying such areas. I have asked them to ensure there are no street vendors near such dangerous walls," he said.

DK Shivakumar

Vendors, however, pushed back, saying the move would hurt their livelihood.

"We have been here for decades. If they ask us to move, it will hit our business adversely. If the conditions are not safe, the government should make it safe instead of moving us out," said Farooq Abdullah, a vendor near Bowring Hospital, where a compound wall collapse killed seven people on Wednesday.

Others echoed the concern.

"Many of us prefer to sit near such compound walls because footfall is high near hospitals, offices and such establishments. The government should work towards ensuring safety rather than ousting us," said Lakshmamma, a street vendor from Jayanagar.

Advocate and activist Vinay Sreenivasa said the government should consult stakeholders before taking such decisions.

> We have been here for decades. If they ask us to move, it will hit our business adversely. If the conditions are not safe, the government should make it safe instead of moving us out.
> **– Farooq Abdullah,** A vendor near Bowring Hospital

"This is not the solution. Even after five corporations came into effect, not a single Town Vending Committee has been set up. The government should strengthen the dangerous compound walls," he said.

GBA to serve notices

The Greater Bengaluru Authority has begun identifying vulnerable compound walls across the city following the wall collapse.

At least 100 big institutions may have weak compound walls. "Officials from all five corporations are identifying such walls and notices will be issued directing institutions to strengthen these structures," GBA boss Maheshwar Rao said.

Cops on high alert as city expects more rain

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) remained on high alert through Wednesday night as the Central Business District (CBD) bore the brunt of the rain chaos.

Karthik Reddy

Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy said the force was fully mobilised, with towing vehicles and wood cutters stationed at identified choke points.

A major tree fall at Windsor Manor, connecting Ballari Road to the CBD, caused a massive backlog. While areas like Whitefield and Mahadevapura saw lighter rain, transit corridors faced gridlock.

"On the airport elevated corridor, traffic moved inch by inch. We had to initiate dynamic diversions to move vehicles onto surface roads to ease the pressure," a traffic official said.

DCP (West) Anoop Shetty, also in charge of the East Division, said evening deployments were increased at vulnerable underpasses and junctions near Gali Anjaneya Temple and Mysore Bank Circle.

DCP Jayaprakash (Traffic, North) confirmed coordination with civic agencies to monitor Rajajinagar and Malleswaram, areas known for old, heavy tree cover.

Advisory issued

1. With more rain expected this week, plan ahead and allow extra travel time.
2. Avoid waterlogged underpasses where hidden potholes pose risks.
3. Maintain distance, avoid sudden braking on wet roads and keep headlights on.
4. Avoid parking under heavy canopies or near construction sites.
5. Check navigation apps and BTP social media handles for real-time diversion updates before starting your journey.

Hailstorm punches holes in power grid; residents fume in the dark

BENGALURU, DHNS

Power supply disruptions lingered across the city on Thursday, a day after high-speed winds and falling trees tore through Bescom's infrastructure during Wednesday's hailstorm.

"The damage was primarily caused by uprooted trees and falling branches crashing onto power lines and transformers. Restoration work is underway and power has already been restored in several affected areas," Bescom said in a statement.

Residents complained of long blackouts on Wednesday evening. Street lighting was also affected at several places, making commuting difficult for many in poor visibility.

In some areas, power was cut as a preventive measure to avoid accidents.

During a meeting with Bescom officials on Wednesday evening, Energy Minister KJ George directed them to take proactive steps ahead of the monsoon and ensure the public was informed about safety precautions.

"Bescom officials must promptly resolve public complaints during the rainy season. Necessary precautionary measures should be taken ahead of the monsoon to ensure there are no power outages," George said.

WhatsApp helplines

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Corpn chiefs visit rain-hit areas

BENGALURU, DHNS: City corporation commissioners visited rain-affected areas across Bengaluru to assess damage and implement preventive measures.

Bengaluru South City Corporation Commissioner KN Ramesh directed officials to clear stormwater drains near Silk Board Junction, which is prone to waterlogging.

Similarly, Bengaluru East City Corporation Commissioner DS Ramesh, who visited Doddanekkundi, Marathahalli, Devarabeesanahalli and surrounding areas, instructed officials to remove silt, garbage, and other obstructions from roadside and stormwater drains. He also directed them to deploy pumps, machinery, equipment, and adequate manpower in vulnerable low-lying areas to ensure a quick response.

In the Bengaluru North City Corporation, Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar directed officials to address all rain-related complaints.

Meghalaya woman found dead in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, DHNS: A woman from Meghalaya was found dead in Bengaluru on Wednesday, officials said on Thursday. The deceased is Kong Agatha Ba Ithianghun Khongwet, 34.

Sources said she was found dead between 7 pm and 7.30 pm. Prima facie, police suspect a death by suicide. "We are awaiting autopsy report for further procedure. An investigation is in progress," an official said. Preliminary investigation revealed that the woman was living with a male friend from Manipur for the last three years. The Khasi Students' Union Bengaluru Unit expressed deep condolences on the death. The union said the deceased was from Tangmang village, Pynursla, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya.

"She was found dead yesterday between 7 pm and 7.30 pm in her rented room in Hebbal, Bengaluru, where she was reportedly living in a relationship with her alleged boyfriend, identified as Nawaz Sharif from Manipur," the union claimed. "The case is currently under investigation and is suspected to be a case of suicide/ murder however, other possibilities have not been ruled out. Members of the KSU Bengaluru Unit were present yesterday, along with her friends, and extended necessary support."

The union also urged the authorities to conduct a fair probe.

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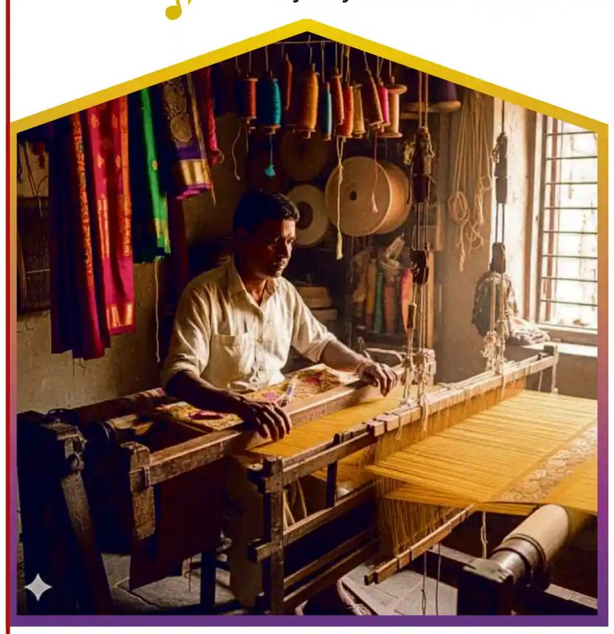

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Now, an immersive playground for Bengaluru's science buffs

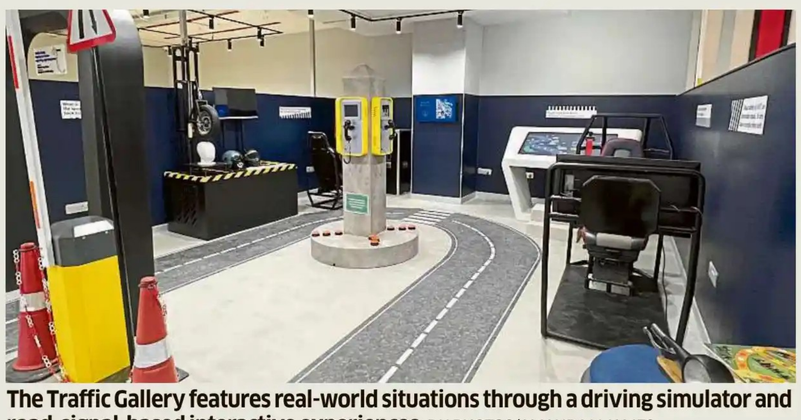
Blending interactive exhibits with narrative-led design, a new experience centre nudges visitors to engage deeply with science and tech

M S RISHABH SHANKAR
TEAM METROLIFE

Located a five-minute walk from the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital in Whitefield is Param Science Experience Centre (ParSEC), a 30,000 sq ft immersive "living laboratory" designed to make visitors rethink how they approach science. A fourth-generation centre, ParSEC boasts interactive galleries, innovative 'makerspaces', and live demonstration zones.

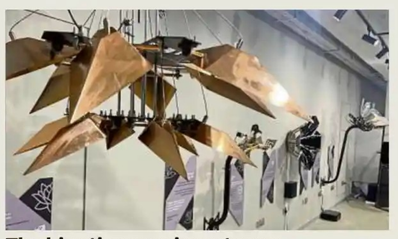
The experience begins with a gallery tracing the history of Indian science. It highlights early discoveries and applications, from a comic strip of a Chola king using stars for navigation to exhibits on architectural marvels such as the Konark Sun Temple and Kailasa Temple at Ellora. There is also a section on the 7th-century mathematician and astronomer Brahmagupta, credited with the invention of zero, and a virtual experience exploring the creation of the universe as described in the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Subsequent galleries interpret the 'Pancha Bhootas'—earth, water, fire, air, and space—while others explore time through clocks, and light through refraction and reflection. Concepts such as optics, electricity, magnetism, geometry, and design thinking are presented using artificial intelligence and interactive technology.



The Traffic Gallery features real-world situations through a driving simulator and road-signal-based interactive experiences. DH PHOTOS/AMANDA V JAMES

Two galleries stand out. The kinetic experiment zone blends biomimicry with mechanical engineering to demonstrate the physics of movement in nature. Visitors can operate a pantograph to simulate a blue whale's swimming wave, pedal mechanisms that make parrots perform chin-ups, and observe linkages replicating the flight of ladybugs. Floral models show contrasting blooming mechanisms: a datura using rigid hinges and a lotus unfolding through tension-driven wires. The highlight is the manta ray exhibit, which demonstrates undulatory locomotion through a cam-and-follower mechanism. Using phase-shifting, it converts rotational motion into a smooth, travelling wave that closely mimics the gliding motion of a ray's fins.



The kinetic experiment zone.

The Traffic Gallery takes visitors through a psychological journey from 'Ignorance to Responsibility'. Beginning and ending with a hopscotch path, it uses play to draw people in before confronting them with real-world consequences through a driving simulator and road-signal-based interactions. This gallery has been developed in collaboration with Param Foundation, Volvo Group Trust and the Bangalore traffic police.

ParSEC will also be introducing a 'makerspace', a platform for people to innovate, build, and solve community problems. "The concept of 'makerspaces' has existed overseas," says Shammi Balla, executive committee member, Param Foundation. Access is available through a monthly student pass priced at Rs 999 and a yearly membership at Rs 9,999 (inclusive of taxes).

The Param Science Experience Centre opens to the public today.

Chef's tables: City's new culinary pursuit

Upscale restaurants are offering experiences where diners get to interact with the chef and sample a special menu

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

Curated culinary experiences have long been sought after by Bengaluru's epicureans. Over the last few years, the city has seen a steadily growing number of restaurants offering discerning diners the option of chef's tables. Typically, these tables are intimate 6-12 seaters, with an exclusive menu focused on experimental flavours and unconventional pairings. Experimental cocktail menus are also emerging as a top draw.

"Chefs have realised that diners want more than just the food and drinks. They are looking at the bigger picture, the overall experience. With new restaurants opening every week, chef's tables help establishments stand out from the clutter," says Aslam Gafoor, a city-based food critic and writer.

The Bunker Room is located behind a high-energy cocktail bar in Bar Una Hacienda on Lavelle Road. "You enter through a cupboard," says mixologist Pritish Dakhode. The eight-seater space is where patrons go to experience a chef's table of cocktails, accompanied by an array of amuse-bouche. Their most recent menu was inspired by Nikkei cuisine—a blend of Japanese and Peruvian culinary traditions. In the line-up are cocktails such as Tainted Cup—plum, togarashi (Japanese spice), lacto-fermented grapefruit and apple, tequila and mezcal.

Visitors can choose from two 'flights'. One with three cocktails and four amuse bouche (Rs 4,500), and the other with five drinks and six appetisers (Rs 7,500). The mixologist explains the story and craft behind each cocktail as they are presented to the diners. The Bunker Room has also hosted tasting sessions with international mixologists, the most recent being a tea and tea-cocktail menu with a mixologist from Tell Camillia, a tea-inspired cocktail bar in Hong Kong.

The Bunker Room on Lavelle Road is an intimate eight-seater space.

The space hosts four sessions a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday). "Most of the guests are over 30, well-travelled and have a deep knowledge of flavours," he shares.

Chef Johnson Ebenezer of Farmlore notes that 'Bengalureans are open-minded and ready to try out new things'.

He points out that chef's tables were initially called 'bar counters' and were usually the last choice, but have become much sought after in recent years as people grew interested in learning more about how their food is made. "It is a rewarding experience for the chef, too. Most of the guests who ask for these tables are well informed and ask us questions that are cerebral. 'Why did you pair these flavours or what are the challenges of cooking with woodfire (which is our primary cooking method), etc.'," he shares.

At Fireside, Kalyan Nagar, the chef's tables are popular with those who would like to get a closer look at their niche cooking methods. They specialise in grilled meats and vegetables. The kitchen is equipped with a smoker, wood-fired oven, gaucho grill and flambadou. The grill was inspired by what proprietors Priyanka and Rajat Alve saw in a restaurant in Spain. "We got a local artisan to manufacture it here as per our specifications," says Priyanka. While one can't control the fire, this particular grill has a gear to adjust the grill plates.

The chef's table is a six-seater, and they offer a five-course meal. Dishes include various cuts of chicken, lamb, pork, duck, sea food and quail. For vegetarians, the chef tends to pick vegetables that are not very commonly used. Think raw jackfruit and bamboo shoot. "Interaction is such an important part of the experience, and more people are looking for that connection," Priyanka states. It is priced at Rs 3,500 and is available from Tuesday to Thursday.

A coffee tasting session is one of the main draws of Indiranagar restaurant, Circa 11's 'Thursday Tasting Labs'. It's a curated experience that begins at their entrance with a selection of experimental coffees, before moving on to the bar for cocktails and then the kitchen for a look at what the chefs are experimenting with. It ends in the dining room with a sit-down meal. "We introduced it in November 2025, three months after we opened. It was an instant hit," says chef Pradyumna Harithsa. In the past, they have created coffees such as espresso with a topping of cream and an orange cold brew with orange foam, and cocktails such as a raspberry and byadagi chilli picante.

Popular Italian restaurant Lupa on M G Road, Phurr in Jayanagar and Nila in Ulsoor, are some of the other restaurants offering this experience.

It is a great way for chefs to throw out the rulebook and focus purely on their craft and let diners experience that, Gafoor sums up.

EVENTS

Lecture demonstration
Rasika Academy of Performing Arts is hosting 'Music for Bharatanatyam', a lecture demonstration by Karnatik vocalist Raghuram Rajagopalan, as part of a series by Kiran Subramanyam, on May 3, 10.30 am at Rasika Academy of Performing Arts, Malleswaram. Check @kiransubramanyam007 on Instagram for more information.

Stand-up comedy
Comedian Kunal Kamra will perform his new set 'Standing Up' from May 1 to 28, 8.30 pm, at the Underground Comedy Club, Koramangala. The show is open to those above 18. Tickets online.

Book reading
Author Jenny Pinto will read excerpts from her book 'The Magical Everything' as part of a book reading and handmade paper workshop on May 3, 4 pm, at Bangalore International Centre (BIC), Domlur. The event is part of BIC's 'Around the World in 50 Sundays' series. RVSP to bangaloreinternationalcentre.org

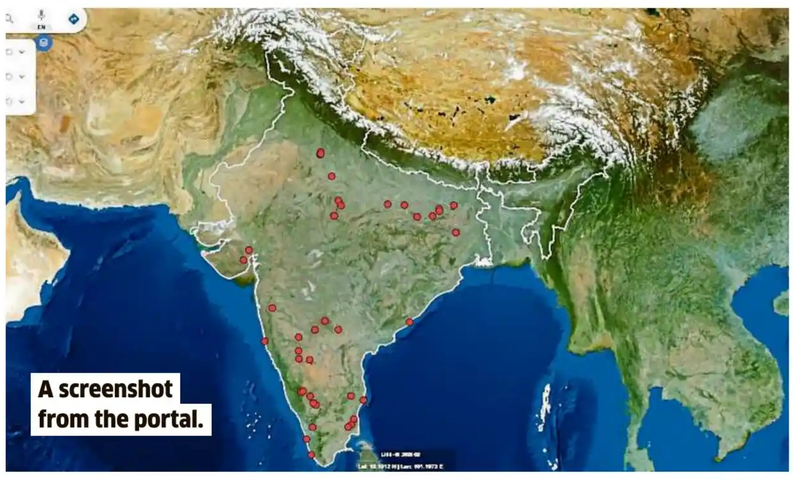
Music
Sapthak is hosting a musical evening, 'Gayana - Sanman - Gayana', as part of the 70th birthday celebration of Parameshwar Hegde K, on May 2, 5 pm, at Seva Sadan, Malleswaram. Entry free.

POPCORN

Sakkath heat maga

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has a tip for those complaining of extreme heat. Carry an onion in your pocket. This is a traditional hack he has been using, and he says it helps him survive the worst heat without air conditioning. When they have a let-up from the scorching heat, people are arguing for and against his idea. The fence-sitters have a question—should the onion be peeled? If it is, the smell is sure to keep everyone away, and you naturally feel less hot and sweaty. Hey bro, why are you crying?

Portal traces hidden heritage landscapes



A screenshot from the portal.

Developed by city-based NIAS, the platform will employ satellite imagery, archival references and geospatial markers to map the sites

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

A new National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) portal, developed with an ISRO team, uses satellite imagery and archival research to uncover India's hidden cultural landscapes, with old Bengaluru among the sites next in line.

For most people, heritage is limited to what stands visibly before them, such as a temple, fort, palace or protected monument. "But historical landscapes often leave behind subtler traces," says Prof M B Rajani of NIAS, who leads the heritage mapping initiative.

"A buried moat may survive as a moisture line in farmland, a vanished fort wall may appear through vegetation patterns, and an old settlement boundary may continue in the alignment of present-day roads. Individually, these may seem insignificant, but together they reveal the larger historical footprint of a place," she says.

This led to Kasturi, a web-based geospatial heritage portal developed by the Bengaluru-based National Institute of Advanced Studies in collaboration with the National Remote Sensing Centre and hosted on ISRO's Bhuvan platform. Inaugurated last week, it allows users to explore historical sites across India through satellite imagery, archival references, geospatial markers and curated feature-based information. The portal is named after the late Dr K Kasturirangan, who laid the foundation for geospatial heritage studies at NIAS.

"It is not simply a monument directory. We are trying to understand the larger cultural landscape around a site, how extensive it once was, what features belonged to it, and what traces of that survive even if they are no longer visibly recognised," says Rajani.

For instance, at Halebidu, the mapping exercise went beyond the Hoysala temple complex and includes remains such as moats, water systems and associated structures extending outside the protected zone. In Agra, the portal goes beyond the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort to map portions of the wider Mughal riverfront settlement, including traces of havelis that cannot be found now.

The portal currently has mapped 47 sites. Its first phase (2019-2023) focused on 20 UNESCO world heritage sites, including Agra, Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Mahabalipuram, Hyderabad, Sarnath and five different sites in Delhi. "From Karnataka, one could find Badami, Belur, Halebidu, Somanathapura and Srirangapatna among the first sites to go live. Another 27 landscapes were added as the project expanded," she explains.

Next on the map: Old Bengaluru

Among the sites to be featured in the future will be the historical Pete and Kote boundaries, the old bazaar spine centred around present-day Avenue Road, the Kempegowda-era settlement edge, portions stretching towards Majestic and the railway station, the larger fortified citadel zone, and the original historical layout of Lalbagh during the Hyder Ali-Tipu Sultan period.

Temple clusters, inscriptions and other historical markers that once formed part of the city's early urban radius will also be considered, she adds.

How to use

Users entering the portal can navigate through the country's map, which is marked with red dots. Each site can be zoomed into, while specific mapped features open as pop-up windows containing details such as name, category, description, protection status, whether the site was already known or newly identified, and its present condition on the ground.

Visit bhuvan.nrsc.gov.in/apps/kasturi

Two-day dance festival this weekend

Shristi Centre of Performing Arts, in association with Rotary District 3191, will host its International Dance Day programme at Ravindra Kalakshetra on May 2-3. Organised for nearly two decades, the event has grown into a larger cultural platform, also encompassing the Shristi Music and Dance Festival, Navaratri Festival and Shivaratri performances.

The two-day event will feature around 100 dancers across 10 -12 groups, with Bharatanatyam, Kathak and dance-drama presentations. With a special focus on kathak, performances include 'Shiva Tandava' by Shivapriya School of Dance, 'Karimayi', a dance-drama directed by B Jayashree, and 'Kaveri Vaibhava' by the Shristi group.

This year, the Shristi National Achievement Award will be conferred on Bharatanatyam exponent Prathibha Prahalad, while theatre veteran B Jayashree will be honoured. The awards will be presented by Jnanpith laureate Chandrashekhara Kambara.

The Maya Rao Memorial Award will be presented to lighting designer Chandrakumar Singh, who has worked backstage for more than 1,000 dance performances.

Entry is free on day one; Sunday tickets are available online.

Danseuse Pratibha Prahalad

Tejaswi's world, quietly preserved

A thoughtfully curated cultural study centre is building a solid archive of the multifaceted works of the litterateur Poornachandra Tejaswi

ANANYA K P
TEAM METROLIFE

Set inside the quiet, green space of Sahyadrivana in Gottegere, the Poornachandra Kannada Cultural Study Centre offers a simple yet thoughtful experience for visitors. Inaugurated on April 28 last year, and open for visitors every Sunday, the centre shares its space with Ragi Kana, blending literature, culture and everyday rural life in a calm setting.

The first section of the gallery opens into a book display and sale area. Here, visitors can find all the works of Poornachandra Tejaswi along with several canonical texts of Kannada literature. Translations of global works, such as Black literature and literary theory, are also available, making the space accessible for both casual readers and serious learners.

Family photographs as well as sketches made by Tejaswi on display at the centre.

Reflecting Tejaswi's own simple and grounded life, the building follows an old architectural style. The surroundings are alive with the sounds of farm animals, adding to its raw and honest atmosphere. A hall within the premises is kept open for community use, where groups can host discussions, events and gatherings.

The centre is directed by K C Shivareddy, who has also edited several works of Kuvempu and Tejaswi. Shivareddy, a close friend of Tejaswi, has carefully collected and preserved many of his personal belongings.

The next section of the museum focuses on Tejaswi's life and work. It displays his artwork, sketches, rough drafts and first editions of his books, along with pens and other personal items.

There is an extensive collection of his handwritten notes and letters. Family photographs fill the space, and keen readers may also notice a familiar face, Kiwi, his dog. The car that Tejaswi used to drive is now neatly parked outside this museum.

According to Shivareddy, some objects serve as visual memories for readers, while others, like the letters, offer deeper insights into Tejaswi's personal life. A separate section is being planned to showcase his wildlife photography.

Apart from this, the centre aims to grow into a larger research space. Plans include academic programmes, exhibitions, workshops and discussions, while also working towards preserving rare records of Kannada literature and culture for future generations.

'Restaurant Week' returns to B'luru

The Restaurant Week India (RWI) has returned to Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi after a decade-long hiatus. The festival aims to reflect how dining out in India has transformed in recent times and has become aspirational, often treated more as an experience than merely going out for grub. This time, the event is being led by Aatish Nath and Gauri Vij, co-founders of Restaurant Week India. Gauri Vij told *Metrolife* that each participating restaurant offers a specially designed three-course prix-fixe menu created for the festival at affordable set prices (starting at Rs 1,600 per person for lunch and Rs 1,900 per person for dinner).

Over 55 restaurants across Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, and Bengaluru are part of the curated line-up. In Bengaluru, some of the participating restaurants include Lupa, Kopitiam Lah, Tijouri, 23rd Street Pizza, Comal and others. "The emphasis is on craft and culinary identity, not just popularity," adds Aatish.

Interested diners can choose their restaurant, their preferred date, time, and table size, and receive their reservation confirmation directly by email.

Several fine-dining restaurants of Bengaluru are part of the fest.

Bookings through Putting Scene. For queries, check @diningcollectiveindia on Instagram or WhatsApp at 9820059201. The event concludes on May 3.

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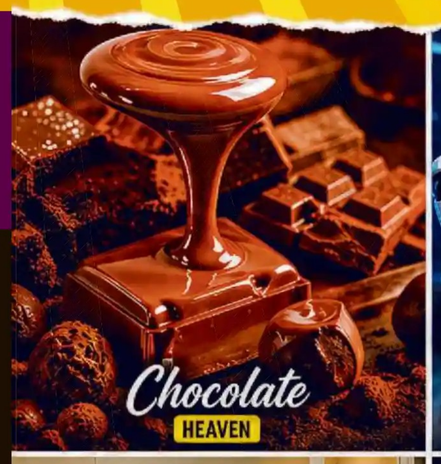

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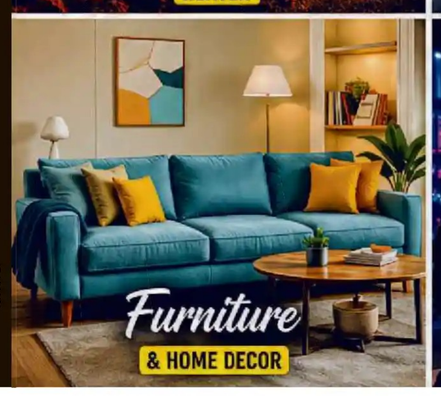

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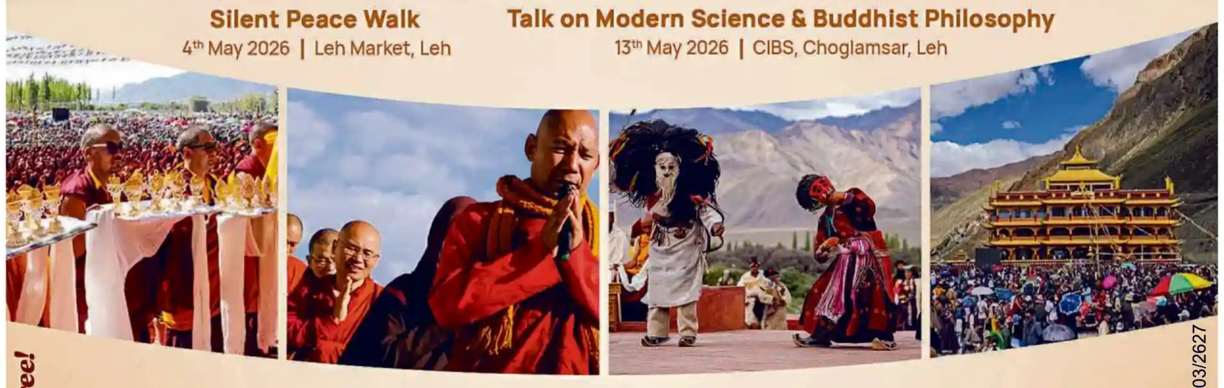
Talk on Modern Science & Buddhist Philosophy
13th May 2026 | CIBS, Choglamsar, Leh



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Non-qualified guest faculties will be academic coordinators

BENGALURU, DHNS: Guest faculties working in government degree colleges and who have lost jobs for not possessing University Grants Commission (UGC)-prescribed qualifications, will be appointed as academic coordinators from 2026-27, for a period of three years.

Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar said that this will be a temporary arrangement for a period of three years with a fixed remuneration based on the experience of the candidates. As many as 3,853 guest faculties will be benefited from this.

"We have taken this decision on humanitarian grounds since the guest faculties have worked in colleges for several years. As the court has also clearly stated that guest faculties should be appointed based on UGC-prescribed qualifications, we had to drop them during the counseling this year. This will be an additional burden of Rs 95 crore annually," he added.

Govt plans 1,000-MW 'sustainable' data centre parks

B'luru, Mangaluru and Mysuru identified for the project

A sustainable data centre park with a capacity of 500 MW will be established near Hoskote in Bengaluru.

GOVT STATEMENT

"A sustainable data centre park with a capacity of 500 MW will be established near Hoskote in Bengaluru. Solar power generated at Pavagada will be supplied directly to the park. The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has indicated that there will be no difficulty in supplying 60 million litres per day (MLD) of secondary treated water, while the industries themselves will undertake tertiary treatment.

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government decided on Thursday to establish three 'sustainable' data parks in Bengaluru, Mysuru and Mangaluru with a combined capacity of 1,000 megawatts (MW).

In March, the government announced a review of its policy on data centres amid concerns over huge environmental costs, particularly their water and energy needs. Karnataka already has 32 data centres.

Energy Minister K J George, Industries Minister M B Patil and Information Technology Minister Priyank Kharge held a preliminary meeting with officials.

A sustainable data centre park with a capacity of 500 MW will be established near Hoskote in Bengaluru. Solar power generated at Pavagada will be supplied directly to the park. The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has indicated that there will be no difficulty in supplying 60 million litres per day (MLD) of secondary treated water, while the industries themselves will undertake tertiary treatment, the government said.

The government has identified 350 acres belonging to the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) at the Baikampady Industrial Area in Mangaluru for the second data centre park. Suitable land will be identified in Mysuru for the third one, the ministers said in the statement.

A combined capacity of 1,000 MW, or one gigawatt, refers to the total electrical load the three data parks can draw to run servers, cooling systems and network infrastructure.

"Power and water will be provided to investors setting up data centres in these parks. The ministers directed officials to make the necessary preparatory arrangements and suggested that a meeting with potential investors be convened shortly," the statement said.

In the next phase, a committee of ministers, including Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who is in charge of water resources, will be constituted. "The data parks will be established at the earliest," the statement quoted Patil as saying.

According to sources, the ministers discussed the challenges involved in providing uninterrupted power supply to data centres that will come up.

In March, Priyank told the Assembly that data centres were "a necessary evil" as they are key to artificial intelligence, machine learning and emerging technologies. "But data centres are also heavy water and energy guzzlers," he said. "One megawatt needs about Rs 70 crore. One acre can yield one megawatt. We have to spend 25 million litres per megawatt per year for one data centre."

He pointed out that asking five questions to ChatGPT consumes half-a-litre of water.

Janivara, Hijab row: Govt mulls re-exam for students

BENGALURU DHNS: Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar on Thursday said that the government is thinking of giving options for students, who were asked to remove the sacred thread (Janivara) and Hijab during the recently held Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET), to re-write the examination.

Speaking to reporters, the minister said that dress code incidents were reported from three colleges and in one incident, a girl who was asked to remove her Hijab could not write the examination.

"Despite training staff on dress code and giving instructions for students to reach exam centres two hours before if they have any religious dress code or identification, the staff from three exam centres: Krupanidhi College-Bengaluru, Nagarjuna College and BGS College in Chikkaballapur have violated the norms and forced students to remove sacred thread and Hijab," he said.

"Last year also, when such an issue was reported, we gave the option to students to rewrite the exam, but the students did not agree. Awarding grace marks is ruled out as it will create legal issues. But, if the students wish to take the re-examination, we will discuss it," he explained.

He called these incidents intentional by some staff. "We are verifying the report submitted by the committee constituted by the Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Urban district, and next year, there will be even more stringent measures," he added.

Paramedical courses: HC allows admission of SSLC passouts

BENGALURU, DHNS: The High Court of Karnataka has passed an interim order permitting the member institutions of Karnataka State Para Medical Institutions Managements' Association to admit students, who have passed SSLC examination, to various paramedical courses for the year 2026-27.

The Association had submitted a representation to the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professionals (NCAHP) on February 11, 2026, with a request to relax admission criteria for the year 2026-27. The Association had also submitted a representation to the state government on March 23, 2026, with a request for granting approval for admission, based on SSLC qualification, which was the criteria followed previously, to courses which have been omitted by the NCAHP Act.

The high court said that the members of the institutions of the petitioner-Association are eligible to admit the students based on the eligibility criteria of passed in SSLC to various diploma courses, including the diploma courses which have been omitted by the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professionals (NCAHP) Act, pending consideration of the representation by the petitioner Association.

Panel moots cooling centres, work breaks to combat heatwaves

BENGALURU, DHNS: Cooling centres, shaded shelters, public hydration points and mandatory work breaks for outdoor workers during peak afternoon hours are among key people-centric measures proposed by the State Planning Commission to combat rising temperatures and recurring heatwaves in Karnataka.

The 'Karnataka Heatwave Resilience and Integrated Heat Action Management Framework - 2026', submitted by member S Mohanadass Hegde, focuses on protecting vulnerable groups, including construction workers, street vendors, traffic police, children, senior citizens and agricultural labourers.

Awareness campaign

The proposal calls for dedicated "cool rooms" in government hospitals for heatstroke treatment, along with ORS distribution at schools, bus stands, labour camps and public institutions.

It also recommends emergency deployment of ambulances and trained ASHA and medical personnel during heat alerts, backed by statewide awareness campaigns on hydration and heatstroke prevention.

The framework proposes a coordinated system under Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority with early warning alerts, district-level heat action plans and heat officers, and close coordination among key departments and civic agencies to ensure quick response during heatwaves.

It also outlines urban cooling steps for Bengaluru and other cities, including urban tree canopy expansion, cool roof initiatives, reflective road technologies, smart cooling bus shelters, shaded pedestrian infrastructure, and water body rejuvenation to reduce urban heat island effects.

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I, UMA B.N residing at #1118, Chikkegowdanapalya, Banashankari 6th stage 4th block, Lingadhiranahalli, Bengaluru 560109, changed my name to Uma Manjunath affidavit dated 27-4-2026 before notary L Puttaraju, Bengaluru

I, RAMESH YUVARAJAN YADAV, have changed my name to RAMESH YUVARAJAN, vide affidavit dated 29.04.2026 before Notary K.B. Sadha Shivappa, Bangalore.

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Cong to build volunteer base for SIR to prevent 'voter deletion'

Will counsel families, assist them in filing forms & documentation

Prathima Nandakumar
BENGALURU, DHNS:

The ruling Congress launched a coordinated initiative to build a large volunteer network to work alongside the Election Commission during the proposed Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, amid concerns over voter deletions.

Over 10 organisations, including 'Eddelu Karnataka' and Eedina.com joined hands with Congress to support voter mapping and documentation.

"We identified block-level agents (BLAs) 1 and 2 for all 224 Assembly constituencies and are onboarding volunteers to assist in the SIR process. A 150-member war room in Bengaluru (Lalbagh Road) will build a 5,000-strong volunteer base besides our BLAs, guarantee committee and block committee members. Dr H V Vasu (of Eedina.com) will train BLAs on how to face SIR," said KPCC working president and Rajya Sabha member G C Chandrashekhar.

During the voter mapping, the Congress plans parallel outreach through volunteers to counsel families, assist in filing forms 7 and 8, and ensure submission with proper documentation and acknowledgement to minimise risks of deletion or omission.

"SIR, across 12 states, has led to deletion of 6.5 crore voters. Karnataka should not suffer massive deletions," Chandrashekhar said.

With reports of block-level officers (BLOs) independently carrying out mapping, Congress has asked its BLAs to accompany them.

Around 40 district-level SIR monitoring committees will hold press meets, while legal teams will issue notices to deputy commissioners if norms are violated.

"Helpdesks across 15,000 polling stations with a 'Save Your Vote' banner will assist citizens. The chief minister and KPCC chief will hold a press meet prior to SIR," he added.

Congress MLC Nasir Ahmed, addressing an anti-SIR protest said, "Deletion of 91 lakh names in West Bengal disproportionately affected Dalit, minorities and OBC. It's a BJP ploy to remain in power. First, they tried 'votechori'. Now, it is SIR, to remove at least 10% of Opposition party voters," he said, adding mosques too would work for better outreach.

Noor Sridhar, president of Eddelu Karnataka, said all those opposing a "hasty implementation" of SIR, had come together to train BLAs, monitor BLOs, educate voters and engage with the Election Commission to safeguard voting rights.

State unveils draft excise policy, links liquor prices to 'social cost'

Govt eyes 8-9% drop in alcohol consumption in six years

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government on Thursday rolled out a Whatsapp chatbot and a dedicated consultation portal for public feedback on draft Karnataka State Excise Reforms 2026. The draft was released on Wednesday, proposing a major overhaul of the liquor policy by linking prices to the true social cost of alcohol consumption.

According to the draft, while alcohol generates Rs 34,600 crore annually for the state exchequer, its social costs, including road accidents, domestic violence, liver disease, alcohol use disorders and lost household income, are estimated at Rs 51,000 crore.

"The policy marks a shift towards a citizen-centric framework, where prices reflect the true social cost of alcohol consumption," the Chief Minister's Office said in a release.

Key proposals

The draft policy moots a strength-based taxation system, where excise duty will be linked to alcohol content along with VAT, moving away from the current ad valorem system. It also proposes QR-based supply chain tracking to curb illicit trade, simplified digital licensing, and standardised health warnings on bottles.

The reforms aim to reduce overall alcohol consumption by 8–9% over the next six years and nudge consumers towards lower-strength beverages. Officials said the formula-based taxation will simplify the current complex structure and strengthen monitoring and compliance.

"The government reiterates its commitment to participative governance," the CMO said, inviting feedback from citizens, stakeholders, and experts.

Public consultation

Comments can be submitted on the official consultation portal at http://www.civis.vote/consultations/1524/read or through a dedicated WhatsApp chatbot.

Users can access the chatbot by sending the keyword "karnatakaexcise" to https://wa.link/uv7q49.

Karnataka students record over 99% pass in ICSE, ISC results

BENGALURU DHNS: The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations(ICSE) announced the class 10 and 12 results on Thursday with students from Karnataka achieving a pass percentage of 99.77% in class 10 (ICSE) and 99.96% in class 12 (ISC) .

Sragvi Bhagavan (99.80%) ICSE

Tanishka B Majage (99.6%, ISC)

As many as 31,018 students from 454 schools appeared for the class 10 exam and 2,673 from 67 for class 12 exam. In ICSE girls have done better than boys.

Sragvi Bhagavan, from VIBGYOR School, Kadugodi, Bengaluru, has secured 99.80% marks in ICSE and emerged as a joint topper.. Sharing her joy, Sragvi said, "I am extremely happy with the result. Scoring 99.8% feels unbelievable, I'm thankful to my parents, teachers, my school and friends who supported me throughout this journey. I focused on understanding concepts clearly, revising regularly, and maintaining a balanced routine. I plan to pursue a career in astrophysics and continue working towards my goals with the same dedication and curiosity. "

Kashvi Fogla from Greenwood High International School has scored 99.40% in ICSE.

Vidita of VIBGYOR School emerged as one of the top performers in the ISC Class 12 examinations and also secured a seat in National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, by securing all India 25 rank in CLAT.

Tanishka B Majage from Bethesda International School, Kengeri, has emerged as the state topper with 99.6% marks in ISC (Science). Thanishka Kilaru from Greenwood High International School has secured 99.25% in ISC Science stream.

Harshil Praveen, class 12, Commerce stream from Greenwood High, Bannerghatta, secured 98.30%. "I have applied for a BBA (Honours) with specialisation in Finance in National University of Singapore and a double degree in Accountancy and Business at Nanyang Technological University," he said.

MESSENGER OF PEACE

Idols of Gautam Buddha put up for sale in Kalaburagi on Thursday. Buddha Purnima is observed on Friday. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

Govt to pay Rs 257 cr to Centre as mitigation cost for Yettinahole project

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka will pay Rs 257 crore to the Union Environment Ministry towards penalties and mitigation costs for the Yettinahole drinking water project, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said on Thursday, adding that he has directed officials to release the amount immediately.

"The project was delayed as the Central Forest Ministry raised some objections. I held discussions with the central minister a couple of times and the Centre has given its approval, while imposing certain conditions for forest clearance."

"We are in the process of transferring (compensatory) land to the Forest Department from the Revenue Department. At present, 10% of the process is still pending and we will complete it within a week."

"Once we clear the mitigation cost, the contractors will resume pending works within a week. We will survey land acquisition in Tumakuru too amid police protection," Shivakumar, also the water resources minister, said after a review meeting of Yettinahole, Mekedatu and Upper Bhadra projects held in Vidhana Soudha.

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) had flagged delays and funding gaps in the project. Nearly Rs 7,954 crore was still required to complete the scheme. Banks have declined further lending to the implementing agency (Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam Limited), citing a lack of revenue streams.

Assets worth nearly Rs 2,966 crore lay idle, as per the report tabled in the Legislative Assembly, which also noted the core objective of supplying drinking water to Kolar and Chikkaballapur remains unmet, a decade later, after spending Rs 15,000 crore.

"Also, the state has finalised a revised DPR on the Mekedatu project, which will be placed before the Central committee. Around 5,300 acres of land will be provided to the Forest Ministry as compensatory land. I will discuss it with Revenue Minister Krishna Byregowda to identify the land," Shivakumar said.

High int'l traffic lifts KIA passenger count to 44.47 million in 2025-26

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) served 44.47 million passengers and 5.32 lakh metric tonnes of cargo in 2025–26, driven by a surge in international passenger numbers, steady domestic demand and strengthening cargo operations.

International traffic rose by 23.9% to 7.23 million passengers, while domestic traffic grew by 3.3% to 37.24 million passengers, taking overall passenger traffic up 6.2% year-on-year, said Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL).

Transfer traffic at the airport rose by approximately 22% year-on-year and now accounts for around 15.7% of total passenger traffic. While domestic transfers are growing at approximately 3.2%, international transfers are expanding at over 50%, it added.

The airport added new international destinations, including Hanoi and Riyadh, and increased frequencies to London Heathrow, Bangkok, Bahrain, Jeddah, Phuket, Kuwait, Kathmandu, Munich and Mauritius. The airport's key international destinations included Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, London Heathrow and Kuala Lumpur, while Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Pune remained the top domestic sectors. The domestic network also saw additions of Navi Mumbai, Jaisalmer, Bidar, Silchar and Dimapur, BIAL stated.

A total of 280,800 air traffic movements were recorded during the year, a 4.5% year-on-year increase. Average daily movements stood at 769, with a peak of 837 movements in a single day. Passenger traffic also reached a record high, with 139,111 passengers handled in a single day.

The airport handled 5.32 lakh metric tonnes of cargo, up 6% year-on-year. Fifteen cargo airlines operated across 38 destinations, connecting Bengaluru to Chicago, Singapore, London Heathrow, Frankfurt, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Demand was driven by a mix of agri-perishables, pharma, auto parts, spare parts, electrical and electronics, and e-commerce.

The KIA handled about 60 million rose stems during the year, with volumes up 38% and tonnage rising 64%, BIAL said.

From today, e-car tax exemption ends; lower rates for luxury & sleeper buses

BENGALURU, DHNS:

The new policy will apply to motor cars, jeeps, omnibuses and private service vehicles powered by electricity.

The Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Act, 2026, which levies lifetime tax on all electric cars and reduces tax for luxury buses, sleeper coaches and other vehicles, will come into effect on May 1, according to the state government.

The amendment ends the exemption for electric cars priced up to Rs 25 lakh. Cars priced up to Rs 10 lakh will pay 5% while those costing between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 25 lakh will pay 8%. Electric cars priced above Rs 25 lakh already carry a 10% road tax.

The new policy will apply to motor cars, jeeps, omnibuses and private service vehicles powered by electricity. Two-wheelers will continue to be exempted. Existing e-cars will also remain exempt, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said.

Electric motor cabs (other than those registered outside Karnataka) will pay 5% (priced at up to Rs 10 lakh), 8% (Rs 10-25 lakh) and 10% (priced above Rs 25 lakh).

Conventional vehicles with a floor area of up to 5 sqm will pay 13% (priced up to Rs 5 lakh), 14% (Rs 5-10 lakh, 17% (Rs 10–20 lakh) and 18% (above Rs 20 lakh).

Conventional motor cabs (other than those registered outside Karnataka) pay 5% (up to Rs 10 lakh), 9% (Rs 10-15 lakh), 15% (above Rs 15 lakh).

Contract carriage vehicles carrying 12-20 passengers will pay Rs 1,500 per passenger per quarter. "This is a new category and covers vehicles recently introduced to the market," said S Nataraj Sharma, president of the Federation Of Karnataka State Private Transport Associations.

Contract carriage vehicles (semi-luxury buses without pushback seats) carrying 20-50 passengers (49+1) will pay Rs 1,500 per passenger per quarter.

Concerned addrssed

The state has addressed private operators' concerns about high tax rates for vehicles with All India Tourist Permits (AITPs). Luxury buses carrying more than 12 passengers will pay Rs 2,500 per passenger per quarter, compared to Rs 3,500 earlier.

Similarly, sleeper coaches carrying more than 12 passengers will pay Rs 3,000 per passenger per quarter, compared to Rs 4,150 earlier.

Sharma hoped the reduced tax rates would encourage AITP holders to register their vehicles within Karnataka. "In recent years, at least 4,000 owners have registered their vehicles in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland Goa where tax rates were low. The low tax rates should encourage them to come back to Karnataka," he told *DH*.

However, he pointed out that the state can reap the full benefits of the new tax rates only with strict enforcement. "Some RTO officials get monthly bribes from vehicle owners and do not collect taxes from them," he stated.

He asked citizens booking educational tours to not fall into the trap of agents and verify whether tax details align with the new rates.

The state has also revised tax rates for commercial tractor-trailers, construction equipment vehicles, those fitted with air compressors and generators, and vehicles mounted with drilling rigs or mounted with air compressor with drilling rig unit vehicles.

The state expects around Rs 250 crore from these changes in 2026–27.

No change of CM for now, says Mallikarjun Kharge

KALABURGI, DHNS: Amid the speculations within the Congress party about a possible leadership change and Cabinet reshuffle, All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Thursday that the leadership issue in the state would be resolved soon. He, however, added that there would be no change of chief minister in Karnataka for now.

Speaking to reporters here, Kharge said, "The question of chief minister change does not arise now since there is a CM. It will take some time as Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and I have to hold discussions before taking any decision on it. Let's wait and see."

Replying to a query on Home Minister G Parameshwara's statement backing Kharge for CM post, the AICC president said, "A section of media, Parameshwara, several party leaders and they (party leadership) say that it's better if I become the CM. But fate... more than fate I am a loyal party worker. Sonia Gandhi takes decisions on such issues. The question of CM change does not arise for now, Kharge said.

Meanwhile, Home minister G Parameshwara said, "We will abide by the high command's decision. But it is a fact that Mallikarjun Kharge's contemporaries in the Congress party – Gundu Rao, Veerappa Moily, Dharam Singh or Bangarappa have all become chief ministers. Kharge is a more capable leader. If he becomes the CM, it brings meaning to his 50-year political career. I will be the happiest if he becomes the chief minister."

GBA property tax rebate extended till May 31

BENGALURU, DHNS

In a move expected to ease the burden on property owners, the state government has extended the 5% rebate on property tax payments until May 31, 2026. The decision will help about 25 lakh properties that come under the five corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA).

The extension assumes significance in light of concerns raised by apartment residents, including the Bangalore Apartment Federation (BAF), over confusion in the property tax payment process.

Residents had flagged ambiguity in certain categories, particularly relating to bulk waste generators, which had led to delays and uncertainty in compliance.

Request approved

A senior official of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) confirmed that the state government has approved the extension following their request.

"The government has agreed to extend the rebate period by a month," the official said.

Relief to citizens

It comes as a relief to many residents who were anticipating an extension, particularly as the payment window coincides with other major household expenses such as school fees.

Officials, however, indicated that overall revenue collection has taken a hit this year. According to a senior GBA official, the civic body is currently facing a shortfall of around Rs 500 crore despite fixing the ambiguities on April 16.

"We had collected about Rs 1,500 crore last year, and this year, it is lower," the official said.

Officials hopeful

The civic officials are now hopeful that the additional time will encourage property owners to pay their taxes while helping the corporations to bridge part of the revenue gap.

MOVIE R | E | V | I | E | W

Grand spectacle, no narrative heft

Dhruva Sarja in 'KD: The Devil'.

★★½☆☆

KD: The Devil

Hindi (Amazon Prime Video)

Director: Prem

Cast: Dhruva Sarja, Ramesh Aravind, Ravichandran, Shilpa Shetty, Sanjay Dutt,

JAGADISH ANGADI

KD: The Devil opens with three murders prompting the police department to provide security to the family of a former police commissioner (Ravi Shankar), who is busy with wedding rituals. The former commissioner suspects that the killings are linked to a certain Kali Dasa (Dhruva Sarja).

Kali Dasa is the uneducated younger brother of Dharma (Ramesh Aravind), a school teacher. He grows up idolising gangster-wrestler Daak Deva (Sanjay Dutt). His love interest, Mach Lakshmi (Reeshma Nanaiah), is humiliated by Deva's close associate, and he thus hurtles into defiance from devotion. How does this conflict conclude? The rest of the story provides the answers and the promise of a sequel.

Prem displays flair in visual storytelling, with well-composed frames, elaborate set designs, and a vibrant sense of spectacle. The film offers several visually striking moments, where the scale and presentation stand out more prominently than the narrative. William David's cinematography maintains a consistently strong visual standard. The climax fuels curiosity around Sathya Vathi, Dharma and Kaala Bhairava, raising multiple questions.

The film's drawback lies in its uneven execution and a screenplay that feels both erratic and inconsistent. The director fails to bring multiple commercial elements together into a cohesive whole. The pacing is excessively sluggish in the first half. The inclusion of three songs feels forced. The lack of rhythm in storytelling hampers what could have been a more gripping cinematic experience.

Arjun Janya's music is loud, with excessive decibel levels that feel more like an assault on our eardrums.

Despite a star-studded ensemble, including veterans such as Doddanna and Dattanna, and a guest appearance by Sudeepa, the film does little justice to its talent pool.

Prem prefers elevating the hero and visual extravagance over depth and emotional investment. He prioritises style over substance. In the melee, he lets slip a solid opportunity to craft a gripping, character-driven period action drama. In the end, the film looks grand on the surface but lacks narrative heft.

Iran threatens 'painful response' if US resumes attacks

Iran, From Page 1

Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said in a written message to Iranians that Tehran would eliminate "the enemies' abuses of the waterway" under new management of the strait, indicating that the country intended to maintain its hold over it.

"Foreigners who come from thousands of kilometres away...have no place there except at the bottom of its waters," he said.

Iran's parliament speaker and foreign minister also alluded to Iranian control over the strait.

Lokayukta to book chief secy, GBA chief for Bowring hosp wall collapse

Lokayukta, From Page 1

The Lokayukta noted that similar incidents have occurred in the past and stressed that the authorities should have identified and flagged risky structures. Civic agencies should have exercised greater caution, he added.

'Vulnerable structures'

"Such incidents recur during rains in the city. Despite knowing that heavy rains are an annual occurrence, authorities have allowed street vendors to operate near vulnerable structures without any safety measures," he said.

"It is a serious lapse that a wall collapsed after just about an hour of rain," Justice Patil said.

Rs 18k-cr Bidadi township moves ahead as Cabinet clears acquisition of 7,400 acres

Bidadi, From Page 1

It may also help in directing development activities, which are currently concentrated in east and northern parts of the city, towards South Bengaluru.

In March 2025, the GBDA issued preliminary notification for the project, which is spread across villages such as Byramangala, Bannigiri, Vaderahalli, Kanchuganahalli, Kempayyanapalya, Mandalahalli and Aralalusandra among others.

Cumbersome exercise

Within two years, the authority completed the cumbersome exercise of measuring every property, assessing existing structures and marking boundaries for disbursing compensation.

On an average, the authority plans to provide Rs 2 crore to Rs 2.5 crore per acre of land as compensation or 40% of the relinquished land as developed sites.

It is raising a loan of Rs 20,000 crore from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO).

Student suicide case: PI suspended

DHARWAD, DHNS: Police Inspector Mohammad Rafiq Tahsildar, attached to Vidyagiri police station, has been suspended on Thursday.

On Wednesday, three police constables were suspended following an alleged police harassment leading to the suicide of BSc student Aditya Myageri.

Taking the alleged involvement of the police seriously, Police Commissioner N Shashikumar has formed a team headed by DCP Law and Order Shruti to probe the complaint and submit a report.

SC internal quota won't apply for recruitment exams already held

Govt to withdraw the order issued on April 27

ASHISH TRIPATHI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The state Cabinet on Thursday decided that its new 5.25-5.25-4.5 formula for internal reservation to Scheduled Castes will not apply to cases where an examination for recruitment has already been held.

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil noted that the new formula will apply to the 56,432 job recruitments to be undertaken and also to all recruitments for which examinations have not been held yet.

The minister explained that the previous Government Order (GO) issued on April 27 will be withdrawn and a new order will soon be issued.

New order

According to sources, the Cabinet decided to issue a new order since the earlier order did not mention the cases where examinations have already been held. The new rosters will be prepared for 400 points.

According to this, Group A (Madiga and 15 affiliated castes) in SCs will get 21 points (5.25x4), Group B (Holeya and 18 affiliated castes) will get 21 points and Group C (Lambani, Bhovi, Korama and Koracha and 59 nomadic, semi-nomadic and highly sensitive communities) will get 18 points.The Cabinet gave administrative approval to the Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Chennai - Bengaluru High Speed Rail corridors which will jointly include seven stations within the state.

The 306-km long Chennai-Bengaluru High Speed Rail Corridor (CBHSRC) will run 100 km and have four stations (Kolar, Kodihalli, Whitefield and Bayappanahalli) within Karnataka. As many as 1,358.96 hectares are needed for this project.

Of the 607-km Hyderabad-Bengaluru High Speed Rail Corridor (HBHSRC), 101.03 km will pass through three stations (Alipura, Devanahalli and Kodihalli). Overall, 237.5 hectares of land are needed for the project. These two projects were announced by the Union government in the 2026-27 Budget.

The move is aimed to ease the population pressure on cities, which is expected to be 50% of India's population by 2050.

Rs 600-cr plan for minorities' colonies

The Cabinet approved an action plan of Rs 600 crore for the development of colonies of minority communities for the years 2026-27 and 2027-28.

Responding to a question, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil clarified that the decision was not political and was not related to any developments concerning the byelections to Davanagere South constituency.

School kits

The Cabinet also approved the Labour Department's proposal to provide school kits including books and other accessories to children of registered construction workers at an overall cost of Rs 115.84 crore.

These kits are expected to be provided to school children from Class 1-5, Class 6-8 and Class 9-12 at the beginning of the academic year.

The Cabinet also approved forming the State High Powered Steering Committee (SHPSC) and State Level Technical Committee (SLTC) to manage and oversee the implementation of the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) announced by the Union government in the 2026-27 Budget.

Cap on CS seats after GO: Sudhakar

Cap on CS seats, From Page 1

"This is to maintain quality and standards in technical education. Even if they have got seats before the GO, they must get an NBA certificate within two years," the minister said.

The Committee has also recommended a 17% gradual cut in seats given for CS and related subjects annually and also restricted 900 intake for all five CS and related combinations put together.

"Regarding cutting the seats in CS and related streams by 17%, we will have to work out the modalities as this will have legal implications," he said. Dr Sudhakar said that the committee has taken a cue from the reforms introduced by the Telangana government on CS and other related courses seats but, it had worked extensively considering the technical education scenario in the state. The committee has also recommended establishing the Karnataka Engineering Education Reform Authority (KEERA). "We will bring in structural reforms in engineering education based on the recommendations of the Committee. For the establishment of KEERA, we need to bring an act which we will discuss and decide soon," Dr Sudhakar said.

Amendments

He also warned of bringing in amendments to act the universities who exit the state ambit, claiming they have graded autonomy.

Recently, a few private universities tried to increase the seats on their own, claiming that they had been granted autonomy from the UGC and argued that there was no need to get approval from the state. Dr Sudhakar said, "We will not let private universities escape citing graded autonomy; it is not possible. The same has been communicated officially to one of the prime universities."

He added that those seeking NOC for Deemed to be University status won't be denied if they have proper infrastructure and fulfill all criteria.

Two of Bengaluru's 11 new flyovers to be tolled

Corridors, From Page 1

Land acquisition is a major component of all these 11 projects, which will require around Rs 1,289 crore if land losers don't opt for transferable development rights (TDR) scheme.

While the government has approved the projects in principle, details such as concession tenure, toll structure, bidding timelines and construction schedule are yet to be announced. Apart from the two long elevated corridors, the other nine flyover projects cover a combined 29.1 km at an estimated cost of Rs 4,755 crore.

They include five shorter corridors under 5 km and four medium stretches between 5 km and 10 km, connecting places such as Minerva Circle to Hudson Circle, Sirsi Circle to Nayandahalli, Old Madras Road towards Electronic City, Sholay Circle to St John's Hospital Road, etc. The state government is expected to fund these projects through budgetary support over the next three years. Former councillor of the BJP Padmanabh Reddy said the grant released by the government for 2026-27 has been distributed across municipal corporations with little funding for new projects. "Many of these grand ideas may not see light of the day owing to shortage of money," he said, adding that Bengaluru did have a toll system for all vehicles entering the city until the 1970's. "Bringing back a similar move may receive backlash from the public."

Satya Arikutharam, an independent mobility expert, felt the government is pursuing "ill-advised and unscientific car-centric infrastructure projects" that will do more harm for the city. "The DPRs for these projects have neither been published nor consulted with the public. Besides the purported basis for these projects is the heavily plagiarised BBMP Feasibility Study published in December 2024," he said, adding the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA) has not vetted these proposals, and all these projects require prior approval under Section 19 of the BMLTA Act.

"It is troubling to note that due processes are wantonly ignored. The government must establish BMLTA and all these projects must undergo Section-19 scrutiny," he said.

NICE: Top court sets aside HC order on reducing land acquisition relief

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday set aside the Karnataka High Court's 2012 judgment, which reduced the land compensation to be paid by Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises and Nandi Economic Corridor Enterprises for the Bangalore Mysore Infrastructure Corridor Project (BMICP), from Rs 1,000 to Rs 500 per square foot.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria allowed an appeal filed by B Gurappa Naidu and Smt Sunitha against the High Court's judgment that modified the 2012 order by the Additional City Civil Judge, Bengaluru, whereby the value of the property at Kengeri Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, measuring 3 acres 6 guntas determined at Rs 1,000 per square feet, was reduced.

"What the High Court has done in the present matter is precisely what may be characterised as acting in the capacity of an appellate court, which is impermissible in the exercise of supervisory jurisdiction under Article 227 of the Constitution," the bench said.

The bench found that a plain reading of the notification left no manner of doubt that the value prescribed for sites falling within the jurisdiction of the BBMP and City Municipal Councils was Rs 800 per square foot.

Base guideline value

The schedule land was expressly covered under the said notification. Consequently, the base guideline value applicable to sites was Rs 800 per square foot. Further, upon applying Instruction Number 2 of the notification, an additional 25% of the base value was required to be added. Accordingly, the computation would be Rs 800 plus 25% of Rs 800, which works out to Rs 1,000 per square foot, the bench said.

The court also dismissed a civil appeal by the NICE against the determination of compensation payable in respect of the scheduled land at the rate of Rs 500 per square foot.

It directed NICE to pay the balance amount, namely Rs 13,72,14,000 minus Rs 4,92,18,750, which is equal to Rs 8,79,95,250 with interest at the rate of 6% per annum to the land owners.

Senior advocate P Vishwanatha Shetty, appearing for land owners before the Apex Court, contended the High Court had erred in interfering with the executing court's determination of market value at Rs 1,000 per sqft, fixed strictly in accordance with the Government of Karnataka notification of 2007.

Senior advocate Anil Kaushik for NICE said the High Court failed to appreciate that compensation was required to be paid strictly in terms of the government-fixed guideline value as prevailing in August 2007 and as applicable to the subject land.

Having considered the matter, the bench said, "In the facts of the present case, we are of the considered view that the High Court has exceeded the jurisdiction vested in it under Article 227 of the Constitution."

Heavy rain, gusty winds hit crops, power infra in Mandya dist, Halebid

BENGALURU, DHNS: Heavy rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning and gusty winds, wreaked havoc on crops and power infrastructure in Old Mysuru region late Wednesday night.

A 62-year-old farmer was washed away in flash floods in a stream at Cheelanaikanahalli near Halebid in Hassan district. Basavaraju was sitting on the retaining wall of a bridge when flash floods swept him away in the stream. Tahsildar Sridhar Kankanwadi visited the spot. Halebid and surrounding areas experienced thunderstorms late on Wednesday night.

More than 250 arecanut and over 100 coconut trees at Mathighatta and Kodikopplu were uprooted in gusty winds that swept across the region. Thundershowers have destroyed horticultural crops, including tomato, beans and ridge gourd, on several acres in Halebid hobli. The strong winds brought down over 15 electricity poles, plunging several villages into darkness.

Rain, coupled with thunder and lightning, battered several parts of Mandya district, including the city on Wednesday night. The showers provided much-needed relief from scorching heat. On the flip side, the Wednesday night showers hit the power infrastructure badly. At least 113 electricity poles and five transformers were uprooted in the gust winds.

The thunderstorm destroyed banana plantations in Srirangapatna taluk. Many parts of Chamarajanagar witnessed sharp showers with thunder and lightning on Thursday evening.

Heavy rain and gusty winds bring down the shamiyana erected for 'Nava Vasantha' programme on Mandya University campus, on Wednesday night.

JJM lagging in state due to govt's apathy: Somanna

Hits out at govt over tardy progress, non-release of grants

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti V Somanna on Thursday criticised the Congress-ruled Karnataka government for the slow implementation of the Centrally sponsored Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scheme.

In a strongly worded letter to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Somanna said the state's tardy progress, failure to release matching grants, and delay in submitting utilisation certificates have severely affected the scheme's implementation.

Somanna's response came in the background of Siddaramaiah criticising the Centre for not releasing the pending funds and reimbursement of dues under the JJM, claiming that the state has continued implementation by investing Rs 17,554 crore despite no Central support for over two years.

The JJM, launched by the NDA government in August 2019, aims to provide piped potable water to every rural household in the country. The original scheme period was from 2019 to 2024, during which the Centre sanctioned Rs 28,623.89 crore for Karnataka. However, due to poor execution by the state, only Rs 11,152.16 crore could be utilised, leaving Rs 16,863.86 crore unspent.

On the physical front, Karnataka completed only 24,888 projects out of 66,244 approved, registering a mere 35.50 per cent progress. Financially, the performance was even worse, with just 9,325 projects completed—a dismal 14.05 per cent achievement. As a result, Karnataka ranks 22nd among states in the nationwide progress of the JJM, Somanna said.

The minister pointed out that even as of March 15, 2024, the state government had not issued work orders for 26 projects worth Rs 1,716 crore. Somanna noted that before the launch of JJM, only 24.2% of rural households in Karnataka had piped water connections. This has now increased to 86.93%, providing new tap connections to 63.5 lakh households.

However, he highlighted that the actual water supply through these pipelines remains poor. Out of 26,591 villages with infrastructure, only 6,989 villages are currently receiving water. No district in the state has yet received certification for 100% household tap connections, he said.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast May 01: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	37.2	23.8	00
Bidar	43.8	25.2	00
Vijayapura	39.5	23.8	00
Dharwad	35.6	22	00
Haveri	37.2	24	00
Kalaburagi	42	27.4	00
Raichur	40.8	27.4	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	34.6	26	00
Karwar	37.2	28.4	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	35.1	26.9	5.5

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	34.8	23	00
Bengaluru	35.1	18.2	111.5
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	37.1	19	70.9
Davangere	38.5	21	00
Hassan	NA	NA	00
Mysuru	36.4	21.2	06
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	36.2	17.8	38.2

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	37.1	25.4	00
Kolkata	33	20.4	54
Mumbai	35.1	26.3	00
Chennai	39.3	29.4	00
Pune	39.8	21.4	00
Hyderabad	40.4	29.2	00
Th'puram	34.9	25.7	00

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
(www.kpwd.gov.in)

Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Special Division, Shivamogga Ph: 08182-222943
Email ID: spdivision@gmail.com

Postponement of Short-term Notification : IFT No. 09/2026-27 **Dated 29.04.2026**

Postponement of Short-term Notification (1)

Ref: 1) IFT No. 09/2026-27 **Dated 24.04.2026**

The tender notification invited from this office vide reference (1) above, two works of Sl. No. 1 & 2 of the table in Bhadravathi Taluk have been postponed due to unavoidable reasons. The fresh dates have been given below. The maximum amount put to above tender is Rs 730.89 lakhs and minimum amount is Rs 438.14 lakhs. The maximum EMD is Rs 10.965 lakhs and minimum EMD is Rs 6.44 lakhs. Period of completion as mentioned in kpp portal.

Tender schedules are given below as per kpp portal system

		Earlier scheduled dates	Extended dates	Time
1.	Tender publishing date and time	24-04-2026	24-04-2026	17:00
2.	Last date and time for receiving tenders	09-05-2026	11-05-2026	17:00
3.	Date of opening of technical tender	10-05-2026	12-05-2026	17:30
4.	Date of opening of financial tender	11-05-2026	13-05-2026	17:30

There are no other changes in the tender. For more details, contact this office during office hours. Ph No. 08182-222942.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, Public Works Department,
Special Division, Shivamogga

DIPR/SMG/No. 141-04/
Zenkar/2026-27

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Deputy Chief Engineer,
BSCC Complex, 9th Main Road, 9th Cross Road,
Jayanagara 2nd Block, Bengaluru–560011

No.: DCE/Z-1/BSCC/TEND/01/2026-27 **Date: 30.04.2026**

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Two Cover System Tender Document System)
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)
The Deputy Chief Engineer, Zone-1, BSCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible contractors registered in Old Bruhat Bengaluru Mahangara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations for the Construction of work detailed in the table below. **(Standard Tender Document KW-1, KW-2 and KW-3)**

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Providing Security Services and house keeping services to Bengaluru South City Corporation Building in Jayanagara 2nd Block. **Approximate Value of Work (Rs. in Lakh): 35.00, EMD (in Rs.): 70,000/-, Category: Others.**

Calendar of Events: (1) The tender document can be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of the Government of Karnataka from: **04.05.2026. (2)** Last date and time for receipt of tenders: **11.05.2026** upto **4:30 p.m. (3)** Technical bid opening date: **13.05.2026 at 4:30 p.m. (4)** Financial bid will be intimated to the bidders. Further details may be obtained from the above office, during office hours or website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Deputy Chief Engineer (Zone-1),
Bengaluru South City Corporation

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Public Works Department
Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi

No/PWD/CKD DIV/AE-1/TENDER/2026-27/514 **DATE: 28/04/2026**

E-Tender/Re-Tender/ Short term E-Tender Notification (Call-1, Call-2, Call-3 & Call-4)

Executive Engineer PWD Division Chikkodi has invited item wise e-Tenders/Re-Tenders from Eligible registered contractors for the works coming under the jurisdiction of Chikodi PWD Division 5 works under head of account 4059-SCP (CMIDP), 6 work under head of account 4059-TSP (CMIDP), 2 works under head of account 3054-MDR Maintenance, 1 work under head of account 2059-PW Building Maintenance, 1 work under head of account 2216-Quarters Maintenance, 1 work under head of account 8443-Deposit Contribution, 1 work under head of account 5054-MDR Renewals, 1 work under head of account 5054-SH Improvements and 1 work under head of account 5054-KRD CL, Totally 19 No. of works, Amount put to tender is Minimum of Rs. 6.40 Lakhs and Maximum of Rs. 232.00 Lakhs.

Calendar of events: 1)Pre-bid meeting date:12-05-2026 at 11.00 AM, at The O/o the under signed. 2)Last date for queries & clarifications : 14-05-2026 up to 5.30 PM, 3)Last Date of Receipt of Bids : 16-05-2026 up to 5.00 PM, 4)Date of opening of Technical bids (Two Cover System): 18-05-2026 at 4.30 PM,5)Date of opening of Financial bids (Two Cover System):"after approval of Technical bids", 6)If no bid received auto extension will be done by e-proc itself for 2 days.

For more information & forms of tender can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in & departmental web site www.kpwd.gov.in. Further details can be collected from O/o Executive Engineer Public Works Dept.,Division Chikkodi during working hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
PWD Division Chikodi.

DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-177/KSMCA/2026-27

DECCAN HERALD
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Elusive peace, expanding conflict

Violence has erupted again in Manipur with public demonstrations, shutdowns, and other forms of protest reported in many parts of the state. Clashes between protesting groups and security forces have heightened the conflict, which began with a bombing on April 7 that killed two children in Bishnupur district. About a dozen people have died in this phase of unrest. While much of the strife during the past three years stemmed from differences between the Meiteis and the Kukis, the current spate of violence involves the Nagas fighting the Kukis. The divisions between the two groups – like the Meitei-Kuki rift – have a long history. With tensions rising, the Kuki and Naga groups have accused each other of triggering the conflict. The district of Ukhrul has been the epicentre of violence, where a retired soldier of the Indian Army was killed in an ambush.

The fresh clashes involving the Nagas have added a dimension to the state's turmoil and expanded the scene of conflict. Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, who assumed office after President's rule ended in the state in February, has made efforts to bridge the divides by reaching out to multiple groups and holding negotiations. The Chief Minister recently visited villages in Ukhrul and held talks with the Kuki and Naga groups. Last month, he met leaders of the Kuki-Zo Council. However, the outreach efforts have not made headway. Notably, the firing which killed the retired armyman happened a day after the CM's Ukhrul visit.

Naga-Kuki clashes deepen Manipur's turmoil, as the state's reconciliation efforts falter

Manipur's crisis remains complex, with the old fault lines of tribal rivalries and unresolved tensions still shaping social conduct and political attitudes. Political parties have tried to exploit these divisions to their advantage. In the first two years after the Meitei-Kuki clashes started in May 2023, there was no serious attempt to address old grievances or prevent the risk of new friction. Crucially, the Central government did not restrain the then Chief Minister N Biren Singh whose actions were seen as favouring the Meiteis. The Centre has consistently ignored the situation in Manipur. The current government in the state has not found adequate support from the Centre in its peacemaking efforts. Armed militant groups are still active in the state and attempts to disarm them have not been successful. The ongoing cycle of violence and unrest in the border state is detrimental to national security. But more importantly, the inability to establish processes towards reconciliation and peace will be seen as a failure of the country's democratic system.

When civic neglect sinks the city

After weeks of searing heat, the pre-monsoon showers on Wednesday should have brought relief to Bengaluru. Instead, 111.5 mm of rain – the highest ever for April – left 10 people dead and paralysed large parts of India's technology capital. This was not an act of nature alone. It was the predictable consequence of sustained civic neglect. The most tragic symbol of this collapse was at Bowring Hospital in Shivajinagar, where a compound wall gave way, claiming seven lives. It was an all-too-familiar scene across the city: waterlogged roads, falling trees, collapsing structures, and snapped power lines pushed Bengaluru into chaos within hours.

Even the best-planned city cannot fully withstand nature's fury. But attributing this devastation to an unusually heavy downpour is to ignore an uncomfortable truth: Bengaluru's disasters are increasingly man-made. Its historic network of lakes and wetlands – once natural buffers against flooding – has been systematically encroached upon. Stormwater drains have been narrowed or left choked with debris. Roads have been laid and relaid with scant regard for gradient or drainage, while the city's natural contours, which once enabled run-off, have been steadily subsumed by concrete structures. What is particularly indefensible is the failure of preparedness. The India Meteorological Department had forecast intense pre-monsoon activity. Yet, there was no visible effort to desilt drains, prune vulnerable trees, or secure weak public infrastructure. The resulting disorder – waterlogging in low-lying areas, traffic paralysis, and fatalities – points to an administrative culture that reacts after the event. Even the precincts of Vidhana Soudha were inundated, underlining that no part of the city is insulated from the consequences of myopic planning. The Rs-5 lakh compensation announced for the victims' families, while necessary, cannot substitute for accountability.

One spell of rain cripples Bengaluru again. A reset on preparedness is imperative

The solution lies in a structural reset. Although the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has formally unified various parastatal agencies under a single umbrella, the persistent lack of coordination between them became painfully obvious during the deluge. More troubling is the fact that Bengaluru continues to be guided by a development plan last updated in 2015, leaving the city to grapple with the challenges of 2026 using a decade-old roadmap. The problems causing such havoc are well known; what is lacking is the political and administrative will to confront them. If the first spell of rain can bring the city to its knees, the coming monsoon could prove catastrophic. Wednesday's tragedy should serve as a warning: it is not the rain that is failing Bengaluru, but poor governance.

POLL POSITION

Arithmetic of uncertainty in West Bengal

The exit polls invite multiple political interpretations, but high turnout and the possibility of tactical voting cloud projections

SUBHAMOY MAITRA

Opinion polls, and especially exit polls, are less predictions than carefully constructed narratives. This time, most exit polls project a change of regime in West Bengal, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) expected to secure a narrow majority. However, a few projections suggest that the ruling Trinamool Congress may still retain power. The projected vote shares place the BJP at around 44%, the Trinamool at approximately 40%, and others collectively at about 16%. Yet the translation of vote share into seats is notoriously complex and non-linear, and this unreliable conversion is precisely what leads exit polls to indicate a thin majority for the BJP.

In the 2021 Assembly election, West Bengal had just under 73.3 million voters, of whom nearly 60 million cast their votes, yielding a turnout of about 82.3%. By the 2024 parliamentary election, the rolls had expanded to over 76 million; yet the number of votes cast rose only marginally to about 60.5 million, bringing turnout down to roughly 79.6%. In simple terms, the denominator grew faster than the numerator. With large-scale deletions, the voter base has contracted to roughly 68.25 million. If one takes the roughly 60.5 million votes cast in the last parliamentary election and divides it by the current, smaller electoral roll, the turnout would already be close to 88.6%. The data suggests a turnout of nearly 93%, implying an additional rise of more than four percentage points over what denominator reduction alone would produce. This indicates that the number of votes actually cast has also increased substantially—by more than three million, considering both phases.

This arithmetic, unsurprisingly, invites competing interpretations. For the BJP, the argument is straightforward. The first phase, covering 152 Assembly segments, overlaps with regions where the party has historically performed better than in southern Bengal, which comprises 142 seats. Coupled with a strong anti-incumbency narrative, the high turnout is read as a sign of consolidation against the ruling party. The assumption is that a significant share of the additional votes has shifted in its favour. This reading is reinforced by visible confidence within the party, reflected in ambitious seat projections and early claims of momentum, even before polling concluded. The heavy campaign presence of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister further underscores the stakes. If this trend holds, the BJP's claim is clear: high turnout implies regime change. It may also be interpreted as a consolidation of Hindu votes. However, the structural limitation remains unchanged: limited support among minorities, who constitute nearly one-third of the electorate and account for a substantial

number of seats in similar proportions.

The Trinamool Congress reads the same data very differently. Its argument draws from history. West Bengal has repeatedly witnessed elections where high turnout has coincided with the return of the incumbent. The 2006 Assembly election, with turnout above 80%, brought the Left Front back to power with a large majority. High participation, therefore, does not automatically signal anti-incumbency. From this perspective, the Trinamool interprets the surge in voting as an endorsement of governance and welfare delivery. There is also a sharper counter embedded in this position. For years, opposition parties have alleged the presence of "ghost" or invalid voters. If such votes had materially benefited the ruling party, the large-scale deletions from the rolls should have led to a decline in votes cast. Yet the opposite appears to have occurred – votes have increased. The Trinamool can therefore argue that its earlier victories were based on genuine voter support rather than inflated rolls. Critics, of course, will argue that the ruling party's organisational strength still allows it to tilt outcomes in its favour to some extent.

What the mood doesn't reflect

Then, there is the third political space, often dismissed in headline projections but rarely irrelevant in practice. The Left Front and ISF are in alliance, while the Congress contests separately. A section of voters continues to express dissatisfaction with both the state and central governments. In districts such as Murshidabad, Malda, and the two Dinajpurs, any shift among minority voters away from the ruling party could alter local equations. In parts of southern Bengal, even a modest drift among majority voters towards alternative formations could complicate bipolar assumptions. The conventional wisdom is that an increase in the vote share of the Left, Congress, or their allies will not translate into a proportional rise in seats. But electoral arithmetic is rarely linear. Even without winning many constituencies, a third force can influence margins, fragment vote blocs, and reshape outcomes indirectly. In closely contested seats, a few thousand votes can matter more than a few percentage points.

This brings us back to exit polls. They attempt to compress all these variables – turnout shifts, regional variation, strategic voting, and multi-cornered contests – into a single projection. However, the elections do not operate on averages; they unfold through distribution. What exit polls often capture is mood. What they frequently miss is structure. So what do they really tell us? At best, an outline: one that appears sharp on screen but blurs on closer inspection.

The data suggests heightened participation; the interpretations diverge. The BJP sees momentum, the Trinamool sees validation, and the third space sees opportunity. Each narrative is internally coherent and collectively inconclusive. Until the results are declared on May 4, every projection is provisional, every claim is strategic, and every certainty is, at best, a well-packaged guess. Politically, there has long been speculation about a tacit BJP-Trinamool understanding, often framed within a broader ideological space associated with the RSS, particularly in the context of weakening the Left and the Congress. The question now is whether this "Didi-Modi" tacit pact narrative will fade if the BJP performs strongly in West Bengal.

(The writer, a professor at the Indian Statistical Institute in Kolkata, is an independent analyst, studying different aspects of West Bengal politics)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The glitter that faded away

A stolen wedding set led to an unexpected embrace of minimalism

LAKSHMI R SRINIVAS

My connection with gold has always been tenuous. Growing up in an area where dacoities were rife, I saw my mother wear only her *mangalasutra*, ear studs and bangle. Her one precious ornament was her *dovaragilli* (gold choker), and we siblings would occasionally look at the exquisite piece in wonder. There were dacoities in a couple of houses nearby, but my mother's jewellery was never targeted, probably because the dacoits felt it was not worth stealing.

My real encounter with gold came when I got married. When I tried on a necklace set at a jewellery store, my brother called me a *Chandamama* princess. It made my day, as I was young and foolish.

My parents bought the set for me fondly, and I wore it at my wedding. The joy was short-lived, as my spouse and I, travelling back to our city by train in a first-class compartment, were robbed of our jewellery by a gang of robbers in cahoots with the catering staff, who had laced the food.

Early the next morning, we found our suitcases open. The robbers took the jewellery and suits; my *saris* were untouched. We had been so tired after the wedding events that we did not wake up during the robbery. We were thankful that we were unharmed and did not file an FIR, though I wept for a week.

We decided to keep the episode a secret and told ourselves that we would eventually save enough to buy the same set again. When asked by my mother and other family members why I always wore just my *mangalasutra* and costume jewellery, I cited safety, sporting a minimalist look, and even once joked about a gold loan.

Years later, we got the wedding set made to order, but it looked nothing like the original. I then had to tell my parents the entire story.

By that time, with my spouse always chanting, "You're not your jewellery," I had started loving my minimalist look.

I have friends who love gold jewellery. Some years ago, when I was still working and we had been paid arrears, my friend bought jewellery with the amount, while I used it to reduce my housing loan.

With the current price of gold, my friend is happy about investing in gold jewellery. I am equally happy I did not, as my daughter-in-law loves the minimalist look too, and values simplicity over display.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Audit ageing buildings before tragedy strikes

Apropos 'Rain: 7 dead as Bowring Hospital wall collapses' (Apr 30), the tragedy at Bowring Hospital is a sad commentary on institutional negligence, not merely a monsoon casualty. A decades-old structure bearing an additional construction load, vendors sheltering beneath a 12-foot wall during a thunderstorm, and rescue delayed by fallen trees blocking fire engines—each detail reveals a system that fails to prevent disasters. Compensation announcements and inquiry committees are the familiar ritual that follows such events. What Bengaluru urgently needs is a mandatory structural audit of every ageing public building before the onset of the rains, enforced timelines for remediation, and genuine accountability that goes beyond officials found negligent on paper to those who ignored warnings in practice.
K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

Routine safety checks

It is shocking to read about the death of poor vendors due to wall collapse. The chief minister's visit to the spot and the announcement of compensation to the kin of the dead, though important, are not enough. The GBA should take steps to inspect such old structures and declare them unfit for dwelling or for setting up shops. The government should make it a routine exercise to evaluate old buildings.
Margaret Rajan, Bengaluru

Cleaner fuels

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has said that there is no future for vehicles operating on fossil fuels and emphasised the need for manufacturers to transition towards cleaner fuel alternatives such as biofuels, CNG, and LNG. He also called on all bus manufacturers to prioritise safety and comfort over merely reducing costs. The transition towards cleaner fuels is the need of the hour, as fossil fuels continue to pose environmental challenges. Equally, the need for quality buses with all safety features is imperative to ensure passenger safety.
S Sankaranarayanan, Chennai

State rules clearly

I refer to 'Staff intentionally removed *janivaras*, punish college: Panel' (Apr 28). The panel has reportedly found fault with the college staff *en masse*. It is highly unlikely that subordinate staff would act on their own without any instruction — oral or written — from the chief superintendent of the exam centre. It is unfair to punish the staff for someone else's *faux pas*. The authorities must print all the relevant instructions on the reverse of the admission tickets to end such incidents.
T V Pandarinath Naidu, Kudige

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

They (Samajwadi Party) have nothing to do with the poor, backward or Dalits. This (SP) is just a group of power-hungry people.
Brajesh Pathak, UP Dy CM

Idealism is the noble toga that political gentlemen drape over their will to power.
Aldous Huxley

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

The material reality of labour

Stripped of protections and facing falling real wages, India's workers demand urgent corrective action

SATHYANAND

Marx famously remarked that "Being determines consciousness." The material conditions determine the thoughts, consciousness, and actions of the masses. The recent worker protests need to be analysed from this viewpoint. Over the past 12 years, the Narendra Modi government has attacked trade unions and workers' rights. These attacks have been consistent, beginning with the introduction of fixed-term employment, the dilution of labour laws regarding wages and working hours during Covid-19, and the anti-worker labour codes. The common thread driving these attacks is the government's overriding necessity to appease India's ruling class of big monopoly capital.

We are the most unequal society in the nation's recorded history. In his monograph *From British Raj to Billionaire Raj*, French economist Thomas Piketty states that income inequality today exceeds that of the oppressive colonial regime. The gains achieved in post-independence India – through the abolition of the *zamindari* system, limited land reforms, the nationalisation of banks, and the establishment of large public sector undertakings – have been reversed in the era of crony capitalism and neoliberalism over the past three decades.

The champions of the free market have begun to question its path. Viral Acharya, former RBI deputy governor, wrote an influential paper critiquing the model of creating "national champions," which has effectively created monopolies. He specifically identifies the Reliance, Tata, Aditya Birla, Adani, and Bharti Telecom groups as responsible for high inflation, citing their dominance in commanding prices despite significant reductions in input costs. During the Covid-19 pandemic, BJP-ruled states like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh announced a moratorium on labour laws. The worsening material conditions cannot be swept under the carpet forever by diversionary tactics. The truth will out.

It is no surprise that in the face of corporate-controlled inflation, real wages are depressed. The political class, shorn of any representation of the working class, has paid scant attention to this issue. If real wages erode, people reduce spending, leading to a downturn in aggregate demand. Wage earners constitute the real majority of our society, and private household consumption contributes to roughly 60% of the GDP.

The economic survey of Karnataka estimates that 1.77 crore workers fall under the category of wage earners dependent on minimum wages. Assuming a modest increase of Rs 4,000 per month – and assuming only 50% of the eligible workforce actually receives it – this would translate to an annual income transfer of Rs 43,000 crore. Compare this with the budgetary allocation for the five guarantee schemes of the Karnataka government, which is around Rs 53,000 crore. Despite the magnitude of this issue, there is hardly a whisper about minimum wages in the corridors of power. The compounded inflation for 2012-2024 was 208%; the growth in minimum wages has not kept pace with it.

Apathy is entrenched

This neglect is no accident; it is deliberate and widespread. In February, the tripartite Minimum Wages Advisory Board in Haryana – comprising equal representation from employers, employees, and the government – unanimously recommended a minimum wage of Rs 23,400 for unskilled workers. The government ignored this consensus and unilaterally declared a minimum wage of Rs 15,300. Only when workers hit the streets was the issue grudgingly picked up by a media more concerned with traffic jams than the workers' struggle for survival. The UP government, while proclaiming the role of external elements in the protests, issued a unilateral interim order to revise minimum wages in the aftermath of the protest, in a clear admission of guilt.

The minimum wage is defined as the cost of production and reproduction of labour power, representing the value of the "necessary means of subsistence." This minimum is not just for physical survival but includes socially determined needs. The Minimum Wages Act of 1948 mandates a revision at least once every five years. Yet, states like Haryana and UP have not revised wages for 11 and 14 years, respectively. Karnataka has failed to notify new minimum wages since 2016-17, despite continued pressure from trade unions. The Supreme Court *(People's Union for Democratic Rights, 1982)* ruled that paying less than the minimum wage constitutes "forced labour" under Article 23 of the Constitution.

The reality is that governments are apathetic, discarding scientific norms for calculating minimum wages in favour of arbitrary determinations. Poverty-level wages masquerading as minimum wages can no longer be accepted. The legally mandated, scientific revision of minimum wages across the country is the rallying cry of the recent protests in UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand.

(The writer is Secretary, AITUC Karnataka)

Power without polarity: Why West Asia won't trigger World War III

ASWINI KUMAR MOHAPATRA

Amid the US-Iran standoff in the Arabian Sea following the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, the ongoing conflict in West Asia has stirred fears in some quarters that it could become a catalyst for a third world war. Similar concerns were articulated by several analysts and commentators in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Historically, the world has witnessed numerous interstate conflicts since the establishment of the sovereign state system in 17th-century Europe. Barring the 1914-1918 World War and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, no other conflicts were truly global in scope. Although many were protracted, lasting several years—such as the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s—the extent of global involvement was limited. Unlike World War II, in which more than 50 countries participated, the current conflict involving Iran remains largely confined to three primary actors. The conflict drags on because Iran's clerical regime possesses the escalatory capacity unavailable to either Saddam Hussein of Iraq in 2003 or to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro earlier this year.

Faced with the world's most formidable military, Iran has adopted a strategy of cost-imposition warfare, comprising the weaponisation of energy routes, the disruption of oil supplies, the use of low-cost drones and ballistic missiles to target military sites, oil refineries and business centres in neighbouring Arab Gulf states. Iranian retaliation has prolonged the conflict, yet it has failed to widen it by drawing in other countries in the region. Likewise, NATO partners of the United States have chosen not to join the US-Israeli military campaign 'Epic Fury', while France and Spain have blocked US warplanes from using key bases and airspace for combat operations against Iran.

In explaining global conflict causation, international relations experts hold that the shift in the European balance of power following the rise of Germany in 1871 was the foundational cause of the outbreak of the two World Wars in the 20th century. The post-Cold War international system has experienced no global power shift comparable to that of 19th-century Europe, despite the economic rise of China and the resurgence of Russia. The differential growth rates in the past two decades have, doubtless, narrowed the gap between the US and the rising powers, leading to the erosion of the former's relative power. However, this process has not culminated in a global power transition, as was speculated in the years following the 2008 fiscal meltdown.

With a vast global network of over 750 military bases in more than 80 countries and nearly 40% of the world's total military spending, the US has the capability to project power in any part of the world. It is thus arguable that the generic description of the current configuration of power as multipolar does not reflect the complex reality. This flawed perception has, instead, fuelled fears of an impending global conflagration. It assumes that competition among several states with comparable levels of power seeking to maximise their influence renders the contemporary international system prone to fluid alignments and miscalculation.

Global conflict is typically characterised by a confrontation between two main opposing military blocs, as was the case with World War II. It involved the Allied Powers—comprising the United Kingdom, the US and the Soviet Union—and the Axis Powers, led by Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan. Neither of the two contemporary conflicts—Ukraine and Iran—has led to the formation of such rigid military blocs. Conversely, the growing fissures within the 72-year-old NATO following the threat of reduced US commitment would in all likelihood embolden Russia in Ukraine and towards other Eastern European nations. The escalation of the Iran war, particularly the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, has boosted Russia's oil revenue by over $8 billion a month, potentially deterring Moscow from active entanglement, notwithstanding its close strategic ties with Iran.

Just as Russia avoids direct confrontation with the US, China persists with its long-standing policy of hiding strength and biding time. The latter, arguably, watches its main adversary deplete military capacity in a protracted regional war, thus debilitating its power projection capability in the Indo-Pacific. In any case, the US-China rivalry is playing out more in the domain of geoeconomics, as both of them are engaged in containing each other's economic and technological leverage while making compromises that serve their mutual interests.

Reflective of this, the two countries finalised the $10 billion profit-sharing TikTok deal earlier this year. Similarly, Russia's recent internal proposals to resume using the US dollar for trade transactions represent a dramatic pivot from its aggressive 'de-dollarisation' campaign. Many such instances reveal the empty diplomatic rhetoric surrounding the emergence of the so-called counter-hegemonic bloc, the absence of which undermines the prospects of a third world war in the near future.

Above all, multilateralism plays a significant role in promoting cooperative behaviour through rules and institutions, even amid intense strategic competition among states. This reduces the chances of a regional conflict becoming a catalyst for a larger war. After all, a third world war, in an age of nuclear weapons on hairpin triggers, would end with no winners, only losers.

(The writer is former Dean, School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi)

The push for census-based delimitation has deepened regional divides, stalling a critical reform. There is a less contentious alternative, but can there be political agreement?

Women's quota: A fairer formula for consensus

A V S NAMBOODIRI

The defeat of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill should lead to a search for alternatives to implement the idea of women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. It opens up the space for proposals within the existing constitutional, legal, and political frameworks. Women's reservation cannot be implemented in a Lok Sabha of the existing strength. If 181 seats – equivalent to one-third of the present 543 – are reserved for women, male members will have to forfeit many seats, without any control over the allotment process. Clearly, this is not a viable alternative.

Then, in sheer terms of numbers, the 33% reservation can be achieved only by raising the present strength to a minimum of 850 (815 from the states and 35 from the Union Territories), as proposed by the Union government, because only then can the existing strength of 543 – ironically, considered by default as male membership – would be protected. That leaves around 283 seats for women (33% of the total strength).

The dispute centres on how to distribute these 283 seats. The government linked women's reservation to the census and delimitation of constituencies through constitutional amendments. Delimitation was first frozen by the 42nd Amendment in 1976 using the 1971 census figures, and the freeze was extended by the 84th Amendment in 2002 until the first census after 2026. The pause aimed to avoid penalising states that successfully controlled population growth – most of them in the South, the North-East, and the North-West – while benefiting the northern, Hindi-speaking states where population grew faster.

The government's proposal to redistribute the 850 seats by increasing each state's and UT's share by 50% is flawed because it still disadvantages better-performing states. Karnataka would gain only 14 seats, while Uttar Pradesh would gain 40, further increasing North India's dominance over the South in the Lok Sabha. This imbalance will fuel continued opposition to census-based delimitation and linking women's reservation to it.

A better and more realistic alternative would be to distribute the 283 seats for women across the states, adding them to the present number of seats in each of the 28 states and eight UTs. But distributing these 283 seats equally among the states and UTs would create an abnormal situation where even states with one or two Lok Sabha seats are allotted about eight seats for women. A practical solution would be to separate the small states and UTs from the larger states and distribute women's seats differently among them.

The numbers align

India has 23 states and UTs with less than 15 Lok Sabha constituencies, accounting for a total of 103 seats. Their seats can be doubled, with the additional seats going to women. For instance, Mizoram, which has one seat, can get an additional seat for women. Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Haryana, with 4, 5, 7, and 10 seats respectively, can have 8, 10, 14, and 20 seats, including the additional women's seats. The remaining 180 seats can be equally distributed among the bigger states, each getting around 14 seats (this has been approximated to avoid a fraction. The total number of seats can be adjusted based on this; see table). The Lok Sabha seats in UP can increase from 80 to 94, and those in Karnataka from 28 to 42. Seats in Bihar can go up from 40 to 54, in Rajasthan from 25 to 39, in Tamil Nadu from 39 to 53, and in Kerala from 20 to 34.

When the number of seats is increased equally among states, the room for grievance becomes minimal. The Southern states may not have the grouse over the North securing a disproportionately higher number of seats, and in effect, greater political weightage. This addresses the concern over 'Northern domination', a key reason for opposition to the government's legislative proposal. It freezes the balance of power between states, in terms of Lok Sabha seats, at the present level.

Reconfiguring Lok Sabha seats within states to reserve seats for women is more feasible because intra-state disparities are less severe than national ones. A neutral delimitation commission with fair rules would be essential. Women's seats could also be allocated proportionally based on parties' vote or seat shares, but this would be complex and disadvantage independent candidates.

This is a compromise formula. The Central government, state governments, and political parties should realise that delimitation based on the census, as it is understood now, is a divisive idea in a country with uneven demographic growth and sharply varied political cultures. It can deepen existing divisions and distrust, and even lead to civil strife. The government should be wise and realistic enough to see the dangers of such a move.

Linking women's representation to the census and delimitation was unnecessary. If the goal is to ensure women's reservation without reducing men's representation, the formula presented here offers a better solution. It can also accommodate the demand to add seats after each census through political consensus, with one-third of the newly created seats reserved for women.

A democratic alternative

The principle of "one man, one vote, one value" is used to justify delimitation based on population, ensuring that the MPs represent roughly equal numbers of voters. Home Minister Amit Shah cited this to defend the census-delimitation link. Currently, representation is strikingly uneven: an MP from Gautam Buddha Nagar (NOIDA) in UP represents about 27 lakh voters, while one from Wayanad in Kerala represents around 14 lakh.

But the principle is not a constitutional mandate. Article 81, which deals with the composition of the House of the People, says in Clause 2 that "there shall be allotted to each State a number of seats in the House of the People in such manner that the ratio between that number and the population of the state is, so far as practicable, the same for all States." This shows the principle is not mandatory. It should also be noted that the right to vote, which is relevant here, is a constitutional right, and not a fundamental right. The principle can only be considered an ideal and a goal, which is not as important as national unity or democratic consensus.

The principle originated in generally uniform democratic societies in the West and need not be considered essential in diverse societies with uneven political, economic, and social development, such as India.

The 2023 legislation on women's reservation, which the government has now notified, also provides for delimitation, based on the first census after it came into force: the ongoing 2026-27 enumeration. It will revive the issues raised in the Parliament, and the opposition to it is likely to be stronger, making a democratic, alternative solution imperative.

PTI

Political Stakes

The BJP is a pan-India political entity with a national vision. However, by proposing delimitation as it has done, the party risks being labelled a regional force that prioritises the interests of the Hindi region. This can hurt the party. It should recognise that there are simpler, less contentious ways to ensure women's reservation in legislatures, and there are more democratic ways to implement the delimitation of constituencies.

The political advantage the BJP hopes to seize by blaming the Opposition parties for scuttling women's reservation will be short-lived. In the long term, the loss will be substantial and real – for the party and the nation.

State / UT	Seats	Seats as per new formula
Andhra Pradesh	25	39
Arunachal Pradesh	2	4
Assam	14	28
Bihar	40	54
Chhattisgarh	11	22
Goa	2	4
Gujarat	26	40
Haryana	10	20
Himachal Pradesh	4	8
Jharkhand	14	28
Karnataka	28	42
Kerala	20	34
Madhya Pradesh	29	43
Maharashtra	48	62
Manipur	2	4
Meghalaya	2	4
Mizoram	1	2
Nagaland	1	2
Odisha	21	35
Punjab	13	26
Rajasthan	25	39
Sikkim	1	2
Tamil Nadu	39	53
Telangana	17	31
Tripura	2	4
Uttar Pradesh	80	94
Uttarakhand	5	10
West Bengal	42	56
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	2
Chandigarh	1	2
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	2	4
Jammu and Kashmir	5	10
Ladakh	1	2
Lakshadweep	1	2
Delhi	7	14
Puducherry	1	2

The figures are based on the author's calculations and are subject to variation.

The formula proposed in this essay would strengthen the country's federal balance as all states will find their parliamentary and political strength increase in equal measure, while the smaller states raise women's representation to 50%. There are no legal or constitutional obstacles to its implementation. It will need constitutional amendments, just as the government's failed proposal did. What is needed is political will and a democratic consensus.

It might be argued that the division of states into small and big, based on a 14-seat cut-off, is arbitrary. But the argument faces a hard reality: population-based delimitation will not be acceptable to the non-Hindi states, especially the South Indian states. Note that the US Senate has an equal number of members from all states, regardless of their size. The proposal made here offers no exact parallel. It only argues that there are democratic means to circumvent the current deadlock and implement a reform too long in the making.

(The writer is a former associate editor and editorial advisor of Deccan Herald*)*

Not just who can teach, but who should

ANITA R SINGH

Every time I watch an orchestra, I am struck by the confident authority of the conductor who brings together diverse instruments into a coherent symphony. I often wonder whether academicians play a similar role in the classroom.

Krishna Kumar, a noted Indian educationist, has observed that social identity remains a significant axis of prejudice and that attitudes towards groups different from one's own often reflect deep-seated bias. This question acquires urgency in light of a recent incident at a university in Bengaluru, where a professor reportedly made insensitive and discriminatory remarks towards a student. More importantly, such episodes may appear isolated, but they point to a deeper concern: the question is not who can teach, but who should be allowed to shape young minds. At stake is not just academic competence but the very ethos of higher education, its commitment to inclusion, respect, and values-based learning.

The many facets of academic life can produce remarkable harmony when thoughtfully aligned. Being a "good teacher" in the evolving landscape of higher education goes beyond subject expertise. It also calls for pedagogical innovation, such as simulations and thoughtful use of digital tools and artificial intelligence. Teaching with cases, for instance, is about enabling students to grapple with real-world complexity, trade-offs, competing stakeholder interests, and imperfect information. In the same vein, role-play brings multiple viewpoints into the classroom, helping students understand the complexity of organisational and societal challenges. That said, teaching with cases alone is not sufficient; faculty should also write them to fully appreciate the key elements that need emphasis in class.

However, teaching is only one part of the academic role. Universities continue to place significant emphasis on research output, measured through publications, journal rankings, and citation metrics. This emphasis persists because such outputs are easier to quantify, compare, and rank. Should citations matter more than journal rankings? Does solo authorship reflect deeper scholarship, or should collaboration be valued in an increasingly interdisciplinary world? At what point does collaboration dilute individual contribution? In this pursuit of measurable outputs, social impact often remains overlooked.

Beyond these traditional expectations, faculty today are increasingly expected to connect with industry, bring live projects into the classroom, and contribute through workshops, conferences, and executive education. In effect, the academic is expected to be a teacher, researcher, practitioner, and institution-builder.

At the heart of this debate lies the growing gap between what is measurable and what is meaningful in higher education. Paradoxically, the most consequential aspects of teaching, which remain immeasurable, are the ability to inspire trust, create an inclusive classroom, and exercise judgment with fairness. Much of what students learn is part of a hidden curriculum, absorbed not through lectures but through the conduct, attitudes, and values demonstrated by faculty.

Crucially, amid these expectations, one critical aspect is the interpersonal dimension of teaching. The faculty-student relationship is inherently asymmetrical, since faculty hold evaluative and institutional power, which makes their conduct not merely a matter of personal behaviour but of ethical responsibility. Faculty members shape not only what students learn but also what they become as individuals. Their words and actions can build or erode a student's confidence and dignity. In increasingly diverse classrooms, principles of equity and inclusion are integral to the teaching-learning process. John Dewey, an influential American philosopher and education reformer, emphasised that teaching is inherently a democratic act that requires respect for diverse perspectives.

Traditionally, some educators have consciously avoided probing students' identities, believing that such knowledge might introduce bias. However, as classrooms evolve, there is a growing recognition that acknowledging identity can also enable deeper connection and build trust. Being inclusive requires the ability to engage students, foster discussion, and create an environment where diverse perspectives can be expressed without fear. Should institutions not invest more deliberately in preparing those who shape future leaders? Faculty selection must go beyond academic credentials to include ethical awareness and inclusive conduct.

The question, therefore, is not how many roles a faculty member can perform but what kind of classroom culture institutions choose to promote. For, if inclusiveness and respect are treated as optional, the orchestra may render music but miss the symphony.

(The writer is the chairperson, Department of OB&HR, Ramaiah Institute of Management)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: MAY 1976

No forcing of language: PM

New Delhi, April 30
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reiterated here today that she was against "forcing" a language on anybody. "I have given this assurance on previous occasions, and I would like to do so again that we do not believe in forcing a language on anybody," she affirmed. Mrs. Gandhi was inaugurating the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Delhi Tamil Education Association, which runs seven schools in the capital. She commended the three-language formula and emphasised the need for children to learn as many Indian languages as possible.

25 YEARS AGO: MAY 2001

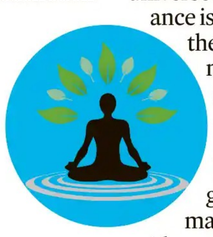
Rao defends his govt's action on Ayodhya row

New Delhi, April 30
Former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao today revealed that the then President Shankar Dayal Sharma, who was not happy with his government for handling the Ayodhya situation, had summoned him to explain "things" before signing the proclamation for the imposition of central rule in UP following the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. Appearing for the fourth time before the Liberhan Commission, Mr Rao said Dr Sharma wrote a letter to him.

OASIS | MIRLE KARTHIK

The universal message of the *Gita*

The *Gita* speaks about the four types of devotees and their characteristics in its seventh chapter and emphasises that the fourth type – the *Gnani* or the realised one – is the most exalted one among them and also the dearest to the Lord, because he is free from all worldly desires, his only goal being to reach the blessed state of union with the divine. But, the *Gita* says, reaching such a state requires efforts across countless lives, each life a step forward in achieving inner purification, the essential prerequisite for the final goal. Here, the *Gita* makes an important observation. "When the aspirant reaches this supreme state, he realises that everything that is seen in the world, both sentient and insentient, is a manifestation of the supreme power. Rare indeed are those who reach such a realised state."



When this statement is read in conjunction with the earlier declaration in the same chapter that not many in this world are spiritually inclined, those among them who make efforts to acquire spiritual knowledge are rarer still, and among them, those who succeed in making progress are even rarer, and among these, hardly one or two reach the final goal, the significance of this statement becomes clear.

But why does this realisation not dawn on all humans, that this universe in all its variegated appearance is but the manifestation of the divine? "It is because man's mind and discretionary power are occluded by the veil of desires, which makes him lose his powers of discrimination between right and wrong, good and bad. His chase of material gains is his worship (the worship of mammon). They are his *anya devatas*, which he mistakenly believes will grant him happiness and mental peace, but which ultimately only land him in sorrow."

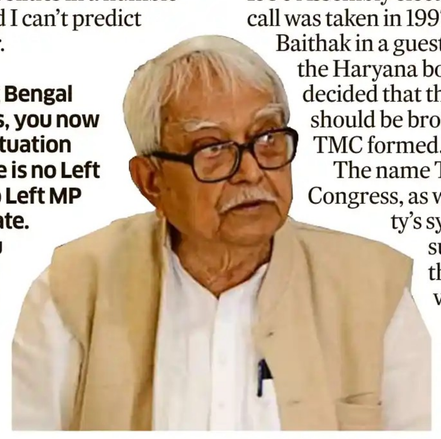
Desires by themselves are harmless, as natural as the waves in the ocean. The trouble starts when desires overpower man into the wrong path. The *Gita* now makes the explicit declaration. "It is immaterial in which form men worship the Lord. If they are sincere in their approach with hearts purified by jettisoning all greed and excessive desire, their wishes will be granted. The Lord will confer the mental strength to progress on this path, and, through the deity they prefer to worship, he will confer his grace." Religion, caste, language, nationality – none of them matter.

Indeed, a prescient, much-wanted message in these fractious times!

'Branding Modi and Shah as outsiders damages Bengal's heritage'

Biman Bose, once part of the famous Buddha-Biman-Anil troika with Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Anil Biswas, is the last old-school communist leader associated with the movement in India for seven decades. Even at 86, he campaigned actively, often on foot, in Bengal's hot and humid weather. **Kalyan Ray** catches up with the Left Front chairman in Kolkata. Excerpts:

Do you think the Left Front will return to the West Bengal Assembly? How many seats do you expect?
I can only say the CPM and the Left Front will not be in a great vacuum in the 18th Legislative Assembly. As for numbers, I am not an astrologer like the TMC and BJP leaders who claim they will secure a certain number of seats after the phase-I polls. I am a common man doing politics in a humble manner, and I can't predict any number.



After ruling Bengal for 34 years, you now witness a situation where there is no Left MLA and no Left MP from the state. How do you see such a transition?
This was done through a calculated scheme. The plan was hatched by the RSS, not the TMC. They planned to remove the Left and the communists in Bengal after the 1996 Assembly election. The final call was taken in 1997 at a Chintan Baithak in a guest house near the Haryana border. They decided that the Congress should be broken and the TMC formed.
The name Trinamool Congress, as well as the party's symbol, was also suggested by the Sangh Parivar. It was the machination of right-wingers here and abroad.

In that case, why is the TMC contesting the BJP if the RSS was behind its formation in the first place?
Because without creating a binary in politics, they cannot keep the Left and the communists outside the orbit. That is the philosophy.

The Left was in power for 34 years, while the TMC has ruled for 15 years. What went wrong with the Left Front? What's your assessment of the TMC government?
After the 2011 election, the TMC began asking how it could pursue development given the Rs 1,96,000 crore debt left by the Left Front government. These are bogus claims. The loan taken by the government is always calculated cumulatively. That Rs 1,96,000 crore was the cumulative loan accumulated by various governments over 64 years. Now it has gone up to about Rs 7 lakh crore. If you subtract the earlier amount, it means over Rs 5 lakh crore of debt in 15 years. Regarding the Left Front's performance in 2011, there is no point in doing a post-mortem now. But as long as the problems of farmers and labourers persist, the Left will remain relevant in Indian politics.

Do you think this is the most communally charged Assembly poll in Bengal?
Both the BJP and the TMC are mixing religion with politics. Government has no religion. Yet government funds are being used to build temples.

Mamata Banerjee describes Narendra Modi and Amit Shah as outsiders, framing the election as a contest between outsiders and Bengalis.
Such wording damages Bengal's cultural heritage. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kutch to Kohima, any person can go anywhere.
We are Indians first, and then Bengali, Tamilian, Kannadiga, Malayali or Lucknawi. Any Indian citizen has the right to visit any part of the country. Likewise, any politician from any region can engage in politics elsewhere. Who, then, is an outsider? All are Indians.

Centre notifies changes to Citizenship Rules

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Union Home Ministry on Thursday notified changes to the Citizenship Rules, 2009, introducing a digital shift across various processes for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders and citizenship applications.

In a gazette notification published on Thursday, the government has added a specific proviso for citizenship applicants involving children that "the minor child cannot at any time hold the passport of any other country while also holding the Indian passport".

The Citizenship Rules, 2009, allowed a person to submit an application for the registration of the birth of his minor child born outside India to the Indian consulate in the country where the child was born, together with a declaration that the child does not hold a passport of any other country.

The changes, known as the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026, introduce a slew of online initiatives for OCI cardholders, including a digital application and renunciation process.

All applications for card registration and OCI card renunciation will now be submitted electronically through the official portal https://ociservices.gov.in, the notification said.

On the declaration of renunciation of the OCI, the individual must surrender the original physical card.

SC: Amend law to allow abortion...

Pregnancy, from Page 1

On April 29, the Supreme Court dismissed a review plea filed by AIIMS against the previous order for termination of a 28-week pregnancy of a minor girl, saying it was strange that the institute was acting to defeat the constitutional rights of the adolescent.

Immediately thereafter, a curative petition was filed, which is considered the last legal resort to challenge the apex court order.

The court had earlier said the pregnant woman's choice is relevant and that her reproductive autonomy must be accorded the highest importance.

Mamata raises strongroom alarm, goes for inspection

TMC candidates allege procedural lapses, BJP calls it face-saving tactic

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
KOLKATA, DHNS

TMC candidates Kunal Ghosh (second from left) and Shashi Panja (centre) stage a sit-in outside a strongroom at Khudiram Anushilan Kendra in Kolkata on Thursday. PTI

Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Thursday visited the strongroom in her constituency, Bhabanipur, hours after her social media post asking party workers to be vigilant.

Mamata visited the strongroom at Sakhawat Memorial High School in Bhabanipur, where the BJP fielded her aide-turned-adversary Suvendu Adhikari to take on her.

Earlier in the day, Mamata, in a video posted on X, asked party workers to foil any plan to change the EVMs or manipulate the counting of votes.

"You must guard the counting centres. If needed, I will also go and guard my area. Candidates must guard themselves. Stay awake. If I can do it, so can you," she urged party workers, adding, "There is a plan to change the machines while transporting EVMs. Do not take this lightly."

Hours after this post, Trinamool candidates Kunal Ghosh and Shashi Panja started a sit-in protest in front of the strongroom at Khudiram Anushilan Kendra in central Kolkata on Thursday evening, alleging suspicious movement inside the place where the EVMs were stored after the April 23 polling.

The TMC leaders said the Election Commission's officials managing the strongroom asked Trinamool workers to leave at 3:30 pm and then sent out an email informing that the strongroom would be reopened at 4 pm. "If an email was sent, why were we not informed?" asked Ghosh.

"The strongroom is extremely sensitive. If it is opened, all political parties must be informed. Why was no one informed?" questioned Panja. The duo also alleged irregularities in processing postal ballots.

Ghosh and Panja later left the scene, saying the EC officials assured them that the procedural lapse of opening or closing the strongrooms would not be repeated.

Meanwhile, BJP candidates Tapas Roy and Santosh Pathak also visited the strongroom at Khudiram Anushilan Kendra. "The TMC is just spreading rumours as the ruling party is looking for a face-saving excuse for their imminent defeat," said Roy.

The EC officials said the EVMs inside the Khudiram Anushilan Kendra had been duly closed and sealed in the presence of the candidates, their election agents, as well as the general observer after completion of the polling.

The votes will be counted on May 4.

POLL ARITHMETIC: WHAT ELECTIONS UNRAVEL

0.00059% Only 1,607 of 27.16 lakh, who were omitted owing to logical discrepancies, managed to get back into voter list in West Bengal

1.59 crore Net deletion of voters in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and West Bengal as on April 10 after SIR

8,898 Candidates **fighting polls.** Tamil Nadu highest at 4,023. West Bengal has 2,926, Kerala 883, Assam 772, Puducherry 294

230 Candidates with **cases of crime against women.** West Bengal tops with 192. Tamil Nadu had 18, Kerala 15, Assam 2 and Puducherry 3

2,353 **Crorepatis fought polls** this time. 981 from Tamil Nadu. West Bengal had 629, Kerala 339, Assam 285 and Puducherry 119

32 Billionaires fought this time. 22 of them in Tamil Nadu. Kerala and West Bengal had 3 each, and while Assam and Puducherry had 2 each

Rs 5,863.72 cr Assets of the richest candidate – **Leemarose Martin** (AIADMK) – Lalgudi

14 Candidates above **80 years.** Kerala CM **Pinarayi Vijayan** one among them

Rs 15 Assets of the poorest candidate – **Maheshkumar N** (Independent) – Tiruchengodu

57.25 lakh litre At least this much **liquor seized** during poll time. Bengal seizure at 48.46 lakh litres

SOURCE: ECI, ADR

Kerala exit polls boost Satheesan's CM prospects

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

VD Satheesan

PEOPLE'S CHOICE
- Lobbying for CM post intensifies in UDF
- IUML backs Satheesan as people's choice
- Satheesan preferred by 21-28%
- Chennithala's seniority campaign circulates online

Congress leader VD Satheesan has received a boost in the race for the chief minister's post in Kerala, as exit polls have projected him as the most preferred Congress leader for the role.

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the second-largest party in the United Democratic Front (UDF) after the Congress, has also backed the exit poll outcome in Satheesan's favour.

IUML supremo Panakkad Sayyid Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal told reporters that the people's wishes were reflected in the exit polls, and the UDF's decision on the CM candidate would be based on the people's wishes.

With all the exit polls predicting a comeback for the UDF, lobbying for the CM post has intensified.

Another survey report has also found that AICC general secretary KC Venugopal was the most impactful leader during the elections.

According to a couple of exit polls, 21 to 28% of participants preferred Satheesan as the next CM after incumbent Pinarayi Vijayan. Venugopal and Ramesh Chennithala received comparatively less support in the polls.

PollMantra's survey on the most impactful leaders during the last 60 days of electioneering placed Venugopal at the top with 21.4%, followed by Vijayan with 18.6% and Satheesan with 16.2%.

Meanwhile, a Congress worker has scheduled a 'kalabhabhishekam' ritual for Venugopal on May 18 at the Sree Emoor Bhagavathy temple in Palakkad. A supporter of Opposition leader Satheesan has put up a hoarding outside his house, describing him as CM-designate. Campaigns highlighting Chennithala's seniority are also circulating on social media.

CPM camps are also trying to draw hope from the exit polls. State secretary MV Govindan said that since Vijayan was still found to be the most preferred leader, it was clear there was no anti-incumbency in the state.

He added that many surveys predicted only a thin margin for the UDF, and therefore, the LDF remained confident of winning the polls.

The election outcome is crucial for the CPM, as Kerala is the lone state where the party is currently in power.

Another exit poll predicts BJP will win WB & Assam; setback for Left in Kerala

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A fresh exit poll by *Today's Chanakya* on Thursday gave the BJP resounding victories in West Bengal and Assam, while claiming the Left stared at the possibility of losing power to the Congress-led UDF in Kerala in a close fight and the DMK alliance retaining Tamil Nadu.

Meanwhile, *Axis My India* announced that it would not be releasing its prediction as 70% of the voters it approached had refused to respond.

The *Today's Chanakya* polls gave BJP 192 (+/-11) in the 294-member West Bengal Assembly, while ruling Trinamool might have to settle for 100 (+/-11). This aligned with most of the other exit polls, which predicted an edge for BJP.

However, this exit poll has given the BJP the highest number of seats, with a minimum of 181 and a maximum of 203.

Similar to other polls, it gave the DMK-led alliance an edge in Tamil Nadu with 125 (+/-11) seats in a 234-member Assembly whose majority mark is 118. Like the *Axis My India* poll, *Today's Chanakya* put the Vijay-led TVK at 63 (+/-11) ahead of the AIADMK 45 (+/-11).

Assam, according to its predictions, is going the BJP way decisively at 102 (+/-9) in a House of 126 MLAs, while the Congress is a distant second with 23 (+/-9) seats.

The exit poll has predicted a close contest in Kerala with a slight edge for the UDF, but the alliance could fall short of the majority mark of 71. The UDF could get 69 (+/-9) as against the LDF's 64 (+/-9). The BJP is predicted to win 7 (+/-4) seats.

Mamata junks exit polls, sticks to 226-seat claim

The Trinamool Congress will win at least 226 of the 294 seats in the West Bengal Assembly, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday, a day after the polling got over. Most of the exit polls predicted an edge for BJP in the state elections, reports DHNS from Kolkata.

Mamata alleged that BJP had made the pollsters predict the election results in favour of the saffron party to demoralise TMC workers. "We will cross 226 seats in 2026. We might even cross the 230-seat mark. I have complete faith in the people of West Bengal," she said.

A pollster skips
Meanwhile, Axis My India had earlier said that it would release its exit polls for West Bengal on Thursday evening.

It has now said it would not be doing so as it "observed an exceptionally high non-response rate, with approximately 70% voters declining" to participate in the survey.

"A refusal rate of this magnitude materially exceeds historical norms and introduces a high degree of non-response bias," it said.

TIGHT SECURITY

Counting centres to have QR code entry

NEW DELHI, PTI

Seeking to eliminate the possibility of unauthorised persons entering counting centres on May 4, the Election Commission has introduced a QR code-based photo identity card system.

While it will become operational on May 4 when votes are counted for five assemblies, it will be a standard practice in all future Lok Sabha, assembly and bye-elections, the poll authority said.

Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry went to polls earlier this month for which counting is next week.

A three-tier security mechanism has been prescribed for the verification of identity at counting centres. At the first and second tiers, photo identity cards issued by the respective returning officers will be checked manually.

At the third and innermost security cordon near the counting hall, entry will be permitted only after successful verification through QR code scanning.

The new QR code-based cards will be applicable for the categories of persons authorised by EC to enter counting centres and halls.

Khera calls Assam CM constitutional cowboy, Rambo

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Pawan Khera

Himanta Biswa Sarma

Senior Congress leader Pawan Khera on Thursday likened Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to a "constitutional cowboy or a Rambo" in the top court over the BJP leader's alleged remarks against him in connection with a criminal case.

A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and A S Chandurkar reserved the verdict on Khera's anticipatory bail plea in the criminal case registered against him for alleging that Sarma's wife possessed multiple passports and undisclosed offshore properties.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Khera, contended that the CM had been making several objectionable remarks against the petitioner. He said the allegations against him were a matter of trial, and that it was not necessary to humiliate him by arrest.

He submitted that out of all the sections invoked against him, some were bailable, while others didn't require his arrest.

Khera said through his counsel: "Let me assume that I will be convicted ultimately. Why is it necessary to arrest me? The necessity is apparently only arising from the angst reflected in the constitutional cowboy's various statements, and that is not the law."

Referring to various statements by the Assam CM, Singhvi said venom and malice were spewed out of a constitutional cowboy or a Rambo.

Singhvi said, "He says I will make the police accountable for how Pawan Khera escaped from Assam."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Assam government, opposed the plea and said Khera showed fake and doctored copies of passports of the CM's wife.

He said Khera had been absconding and releasing videos, and all the allegations about the CM's wife were false.

EC nod to 'Telangana Rakshana Sena' for Kavitha's party

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

The Election Commission has provisionally allotted the name Telangana Rakshana Sena to former MP K Kavitha's newly launched political party.

When Kavitha launched her party on April 25, she announced the acronym TRS, but did not spell out the full name. However, the party's branding, flag and official communications carried the name Telangana Rashtra Sena. Even party members were referring to it as Telangana Rashtra Sena in official communications.

In a written communication to Kavitha, EC said, "The name 'Telangana Rakshana Sena' proposed by you has been permitted for publication of a public notice in the newspaper. You are required to publish a public notice about your association in the approved name—'Telangana Rakshana Sena'—for registration as a political party in two national newspapers and two local newspapers of the State where the party's headquarters is located, inviting objections from the general public within one month (30 days)."

It added that final approval would be subject to any objections filed by existing parties or members of the public.

Welcoming the decision, Kavitha said, "Telangana Rakshana Sena it is. We will relentlessly work to serve and protect the people of Telangana, as we have done over the last two decades through Telangana Jagruthi."

IN BRIEF

Vietnam Prez Lam to visit India next week

NEW DELHI, PTI: Vietnamese President To Lam will undertake a three-day visit to India next week to further fortify bilateral ties in areas of defence, trade and critical technologies against the backdrop of increasing geopolitical upheavals and trade disruptions.

To Lam

Lam will lead a high-level delegation of ministers and top executives during his state visit to India from May 5 to 7. It will be his first state visit to India after being elected as the president this month.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Lam will hold wide-ranging talks that are expected to focus on boosting the overall trajectory of the India-Vietnam comprehensive strategic partnership with a focus on enhancing ties in trade, defence and critical technologies.

Child dies of snakebite

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: A four-year-old died following a snakebite at Kasaragod in Kerala on Thursday.

Rithu Chandra, the daughter of Sarath and Ajitha of Narkilakkadu, had been bitten by a snake on Monday.

At least eight persons, including three children, in Kerala died of snakebite in the last couple of weeks.

The child was bitten by a cobra while playing at her home. She was reportedly trying to retrieve a ball from a heap of wood.

After emergency care at a nearby hospital, she was rushed to the Government Medical College hospital in Kannur, and was also administered anti-venom. However, she could not be saved.

PDP leader Iltija Mufti booked

SRINAGAR, DHNS: The J&K Police have registered an FIR against PDP leader Iltija Mufti and others for allegedly circulating secessionist content on social media, with a post featuring late Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, said officials on Thursday.

The case follows inputs about the dissemination of videos and other material allegedly promoting separatist ideology through digital platforms.

The police said the dissemination of such material amounted to an attempt to promote separatist and divisive ideologies. The FIR invokes BNS provisions, including Sections 152, 196 and 353.

I-PAC director gets bail

NEW DELHI, PTI: A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to I-PAC co-founder and director Vinesh Chandel in a money laundering case linked to an alleged coal scam in West Bengal.

Additional Sessions Judge Amit Bansal noted that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has not opposed the bail plea.

Justice Bansal, however, imposed several bail conditions.

Zubeen case: No bail to accused

GUWAHATI, DHNS: A fast-track court here on Thursday rejected a petition seeking bail for Shyamkanu Mahanta, the "principal accused" in the alleged murder of singer Zubeen Garg, citing the possibility of him flying away after getting the bail.

Mahanta, a Guwahati-based entrepreneur, had organised the North East India Festival in Singapore, where Zubeen was a cultural ambassador.

He was arrested on October 1 and has been lodged in judicial custody along with six other accused.

Mizoram militancy-free after last rebel group surrenders

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

The northeastern state of Mizoram is now free from militancy after the surrender of over 40 cadres of the only active insurgent group in the state.

Altogether 43 cadres of the Lalhmingthanga Sanate faction of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) laid down their weapons at the "homecoming and arms laying ceremony", in Aizawl on Thursday. Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Home Minister K. Sapdanga were among those present at the programme.

The chief minister said that peace "is hard-earned and demands sacrifice". He urged citizens to reject any ideology, policy, or action that could give rise to unrest or conflict, and to work collectively towards sustaining peace and stability in Mizoram.

The cadres formally handed over their arms to IGP (Headquarters) H. Ramthlengliana, followed by an oath-taking ceremony, in which they pledged to renounce violence. The faction had signed a peace agreement with the government on April 14.

Militancy in Mizoram

After years of armed conflict led by the Mizo National Front, peace returned to Mizoram with the signing of the Mizo Peace Accord in 1986.

But a section of the Hmar community felt that their aspirations remained unfulfilled, leading to the formation of the Hmar People's Convention.

In 1994, an agreement with the government resulted in the establishment of the Sinlung Hills Development Council. Subsequently, a faction formed the HPC (D) under the leadership of Lalhmingthanga Sanate.

Another faction, led by H. Lalsangbera, signed a peace agreement with the government in April 2018. But the Sanate faction remained out of the peace process till 2024 when talks began. After four rounds of negotiations, an agreement was signed on April 14.

"With this development, Mizoram no longer has any active underground ethnic insurgent groups," the Mizoram government said in a statement.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Italian counterpart Guido Crosetto in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

India, Italy to boost defence ties for co-production

Leaders unveil bilateral cooperation plan 2026-27

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India and Italy on Thursday resolved to develop a defence industrial framework for co-production of military hardware, even as the two sides explored the possibility of co-developing critical technologies needed by India's coastal defence force.

The decision to bolster bilateral defence and strategic ties was reached during talks here between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Italian counterpart Guido Crosetto.

The two sides unveiled a bilateral military cooperation plan 2026-27 outlining the military engagements between the armed forces of both countries.

"We discussed a wide range of regional and global issues, including the current situation in West Asia. We also discussed the avenues to further develop mutually beneficial defence industrial cooperation under India's Atmanirbhar Bharat programme and Italy's defence cooperation initiative," Singh said in a social media post.

Parallelly, the Indian Coast Guard held a discussion with the Italian shipyard Fincantieri for future projects, with emphasis on advanced design features, including resilient hulls for higher sea states, enhanced bollard pull, integrated firefighting systems, and hybrid/electric propulsion.

The talks between the coast guard and one of the world's biggest shipyards also explored modular ship design for versatile and multi-role platforms with rapid operational adaptability.

The two sides also deliberated on indigenous development and co-development of niche technologies such as dynamic positioning systems, advanced thrusters, Artificial Intelligence-enabled decision support, counter-unstaffed aerial systems and next-generation green propulsion.

Under the broader framework of defence ties, India and Italy have been looking at boosting cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region with an aim to increase interoperability and cooperation.

Tech collaboration

The two countries have been exploring avenues for enhanced partnerships and dialogue among public and private stakeholders, focusing on technology collaboration, co-production and co-development of defence platforms and equipment.

The two coordinated meetings involving the ministerial delegations and Fincantieri come more than two years after India and Italy signed an "agreement of cooperation" in defence, which, among other things, seeks to promote "co-development, co-production and setting up of joint ventures" between Indian and Italian companies.

Screen time, sleep rules in CBSE's parenting guide

Board pushes shared responsibility in education

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The CBSE has rolled out a new feature — a parenting calendar. Aimed at helping parents raise their children, the calendar is a 60-page framework detailing parents' roles during studies, bedtime rituals, screen usage and handling academic pressure. It was released on Wednesday on the CBSE's YouTube channel.

Stating that the calendar is aimed at providing a layout for "structured and need-based parent–teacher interactions" and for being a "dedicated space for parent reflection", the framework details what area of education a parent should focus on, corresponding to the child's academic age.

The framework said that it enables "shared responsibility" of the school and parents in teaching children. "Address student needs more effectively through timely parent-school collaboration. Foster a sense of shared responsibility and community within the school ecosystem," the framework states, listing its objectives.

The document details the number of meetings that parents should have with teachers, including subject teachers, in addition to parent-teacher meetings (PTMs), and lists a number of workshops that parents should attend to learn the process. The document also lists that the school convey to parents the "teacher-led activities" in early childhood, such as teaching values like kindness, sensory play, foundational literacy and numeracy activities, lessons on nutrition and self-care, etc.

The calendar also specifies the focus that a parent should pursue at various ages of the child. For instance, at the foundation stage, when the child is between the ages of 3 and 7, parents are advised to resist "premature academic pressure" and encouraged to celebrate "effort and curiosity" over correctness. In the same age group, parents have been advised to limit screen usage. Similarly, at the ages between 7 and 10, parents have been asked to focus on "how to respond when your child is not the topper".

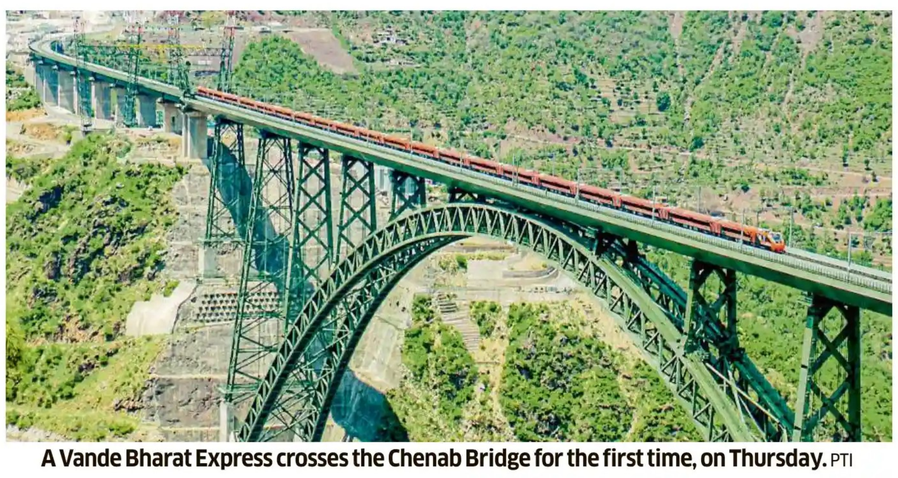
The framework also advises schools to alleviate parental anxiety owing to various changes in the curriculum following the recent changes in the National Education Policy.

However, several parents felt the CBSE was overstepping its role as an educator. A Noida-based mother of two, whose children study in an acclaimed school in the NCR, said the framework seemed designed to help schools subtly push parents to do more while promising to deliver more.

"School fees remain unregulated, textbooks are unavailable when needed, and this is a book on how parents are supposed to behave at home. The government should not interfere in the parent-child relationship," the working mother said.

SHARED ROLE

- CBSE rolls out 60-page parenting calendar
- Framework seeks structured parent-teacher interaction
- Shared responsibility between schools and parents stressed
- Parents urged to resist premature academic pressure
- Some parents say CBSE oversteps role as educator



A Vande Bharat Express crosses the Chenab Bridge for the first time, on Thursday. PTI

First direct Srinagar-Jammu train flagged off

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday flagged off a 20-coach Vande Bharat Express between Jammu and Srinagar, marking the first direct train service linking the twin capitals of Jammu and Kashmir and cutting travel time to just 4 hours and 50 minutes.

The all-weather Vande Bharat service is expected to boost tourism and improve connectivity in the Union Territory significantly.

Until now, passengers travelling from Srinagar had to disembark at Katra and change trains for Jammu. The new service eliminates this inconvenience, offering a seamless direct connection, greater passenger convenience.

The latest extension builds on earlier milestones. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the first direct train service between Katra and Srinagar on June 6, 2025. This service has now been extended up to Jammu Tawi railway station following key infrastructure upgrades, including yard remodelling at Jammu.

The service is part of the ambitious Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), a Rs 43,780-crore project aimed at connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country. Conceived in the 1990s and sanctioned in 1994–95, the project was declared a National Project in 2002.

Govt reviews households with dual LPG, PNG connections

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Centre has initiated a nationwide assessment to identify households holding both liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and piped natural gas (PNG) connections, as part of efforts to prevent dual access amid tightening cooking gas supplies.

"Assessment is being done as to how many have dual connections," said Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma during an inter-ministerial press briefing on developments in West Asia.

Last month, the ministry barred households with PNG connections from retaining or obtaining subsidised domestic LPG cylinders. Through a March 14 notification, the government amended the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000, under the Essential Commodities Act.

Sharma noted that more than 43,000 LPG users with PNG connections have so far surrendered their LPG connections. However, she said it was "a low number", and that the government expects many more surrenders. "Those having PNG connections have also been barred from obtaining a domestic LPG connection," she said.

The amendment

The amendment makes it mandatory for consumers with PNG connections to surrender their domestic LPG connections. The move aims to accelerate PNG rollout and reduce pressure on subsidised LPG supplies, which are strained due to global energy disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict.

The amended order also prohibits government oil companies and their distributors from issuing new domestic LPG connections or providing refills to those who already have a PNG supply.

India remains heavily dependent on imports, with about 88% of its crude oil, 50% of its natural gas, and 60% of its LPG needs met through overseas sources, mostly from the Gulf region. However, the West Asia conflict has disrupted supplies.

ICSE, ISC results: Girls outperform boys; pass rate over 99%

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations on Thursday declared the Class 10 and Class 12 results for 2026, with overall pass percentages of 99.18% and 99.13%, respectively.

A total of 2,58,721 candidates appeared for the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), or Class 10, examination.

About 1,03,316 students took the Indian School Certificate (ISC), or Class 12, exam.

Girls outperformed boys in both examinations.

In ICSE, girls recorded a pass percentage of 99.46% compared to 98.93% for boys. In ISC, girls achieved a 99.48% pass percentage, while those of boys stood at 98.81%.

In the ICSE exam, 2,56,590 candidates qualified, while 2,131 did not clear the exam.

In the ISC exam, 1,02,414 candidates qualified, while 902 did not.

Tiger, cub die in Kanha reserve; big cat toll rises to 27 this year

MANDLA/BHOPAL, PTI: A tigress and her cub have died in Madhya Pradesh's Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR), officials said on Thursday, as the number of big cat deaths in the state rose to 27 so far this year.

The tigress, in the age group of 8 to 10 years, and her cub, about 18 months old, had been kept at a quarantine room in the KTR for treatment. Both died during treatment on Wednesday, wildlife veterinarian Dr Sandeep Agarwal said.

Three other cubs of the tigress died between April 21 and 25 from natural causes, drowning, and lung infection. The big cat and her fourth cub were rescued from the Sarhi range last week and shifted to the quarantine facility, where they also died.

As per the 2022 census, Madhya Pradesh had 785 tigers, the highest in the country. The state is home to nine tiger reserves.

Odisha 'skeleton' row: Initial probe suggests 'bank at fault'

KEONJHAR (ODISHA), PTI: Preliminary findings of a probe into the episode of a tribal man carrying his sister's skeleton to a bank in Keonjhar district as proof of death to withdraw her money indicate that the staff "did not cooperate with him", a senior official said on Thursday.

The Odisha government on Thursday started the probe into the incident, after a shocking clip of the 50-year-old man carrying the remains to the Maliposi branch of Odisha Grameen Bank went viral on social media, causing an uproar.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had directed the revenue divisional commissioner (RDC) of Northern Division to initiate the probe.

As part of the investigation, Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, the RDC of Northern Division, along with Keonjhar District Collector Vishal Singh and other officials, visited the Maliposi branch of Odisha Grameen Bank on Thursday.

Mohapatra checked the CCTV footage and questioned the bank officials to ascertain the circumstances leading to the incident, officials said.

The team also visited Dianali village under Patana block of Keonjhar district and questioned Jeetu Munda, who had carried the skeleton of his sister Karla Munda (56) to the bank.

Mohapatra said preliminary investigation suggests that the "bank was at fault" and stringent action will be taken against the officials responsible for the entire episode.

"I spoke to the bank officials and Jeetu Munda. Preliminary findings indicate that the bank was at fault. Munda and his sister had visited the bank several times in the past and withdrawn money. Munda is not illiterate, but he is ignorant about the banking procedures," Mohapatra told reporters.

"As there is no audio version of the CCTV footage, we are not able to ascertain what exactly the bank staff told him. Munda was present in the bank from 11.26 am to 11.58 am. During this time, he met the bank manager twice and returned aggrieved," the RDC said.

On Tuesday, a day after the incident, the Indian Overseas Bank had said the episode appears to have arisen due to a lack of awareness of the claim settlement process, and the individual's unwillingness to accept the procedures explained by branch manager.

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Pulikeshinagara Division, Robertson Road, Bengaluru.
No: EE/(PN)/TEND/PR/02/2026-27 Date: 30-04-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(SINGLE COVER SYSTEM)

(Through **GOK** KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** only)
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Commissioner, BNCC for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations. **(Standard Tender Document KW-1)**

Sl No.	Name of the Work
	General Category Works
1.	Establishment of Temporary Control Room for Mansoon period in 2026 in Varalakshminagar sub division **Est Cost: ₹.10.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹.25,000.00**
2.	Establishment of Temporary Control Room for Mansoon period in 2026 in Kushalanagar sub division **Est Cost: ₹.10.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹.25,000.00**
3.	Establishment of Temporary Control Room for Mansoon period in 2026 in Sagayapuram sub division **Est Cost: ₹.10.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹.25,000.00**
4.	Establishment of Temporary Control Room for Mansoon period in 2026 in Pulikeshinagar sub division **Est Cost: ₹.10.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹.25,000.00**
	ST Category Works
1.	Establishment of Temporary Control Room for Mansoon period in 2026 in Kavalbyrasandra sub division **Est Cost: ₹.10.00 Lakhs, EMD: ₹.12,500.00**

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP portal from **04-05-2026** (2) Pre-bid meeting will be held on **05-05-2026** at **3:00** pm. (3) Last Date & Time for Receipts of tenders on **12-05-2026** upto **4:00** pm. (4) Date of Opening of Financial Bid on **13-05-2026** after **4:30** pm.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Pulikeshinagar Division

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No. SEE/Tr(Op)/S-Circle/EE(O)/AEE-2/F-310(12)/26-27/587-88 Date: 30.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal Only)

KPTCL invites bid against enquiry no: **KPTCL/SEE/TR(Op)/S-Circle/EE(O)/AEE-2/25-26/EPR-27/Call-01, Dt:31.03.2026** for the work of Providing additional 11kV Bank and Bus coupler for connecting feeders of Bank-2A at 66/11kV **RBI Layout** sub-station pertaining to Operation Division, Subramanyapura, Bengaluru **on partial Turnkey Basis on Percentage basis** including supply of all matching materials/equipments (Excluding Switchgear) and erection (including civil works) of all materials/equipments, testing and commissioning pertaining to Operation Division **Subramanyapura** in the jurisdiction of Transmission (Operation) Circle-South, Bengaluru.
The detailed notification regarding the subject tenders can be got by logging on to **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink 'E Procurement KPTCL' or to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **02.05.2026.** Any other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Ele.),
Transmission (Operation) Circle-South, KPTCL,
Office Complex, Ground Floor, A.R. Circle, Bengaluru - 09,

KARNATAKA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
No. 16 C-1, Millers Tank Bed Area, Vasanthanagara,
Bengaluru-560052. Phone: 080-22268677/78/79 Fax: 080-22268667
Email: kerc-ka@nic.in Website: https://kerc.karnataka.gov.in
No: KERC/DD(A)/E-Court/2024-25/1939 Date: 30.04.2026

TENDER NOTICE

Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Bengaluru - 560 052 invites Electronic Bids, under Competitive Bidding from eligible Bidders / Agencies to Supply, Install, Configure and Commissioning of Hardware including IT for Digital / E-Court Project at KERC as per the Scope of Work and the Terms & Conditions as indicated in the Tender Document.
The soft copies of tender documents may be downloaded and submitted through e-Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** during the period **from 29.04.2026, 12.30 pm onwards to 20.05.2026 before 11.00 am.**
For further information, please contact helpdesk phone number 080-222686777 / 78 / 79 - Extension No. 214 / 215 of KERC between 10.00 AM and 6.00 PM on working days.

Sd/- Tender Inviting Authority
DIPR/CP/YC/447/2026-27 For Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission

PM SHRI School Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya
(A Unit of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti) Ministry of Education, Deptt. Of School Education & Literacy, Govt. of IndiaVillage: Yenigadale, District: Chikkaballapura, State: Karnataka,Pin Code: 563125
F.No.05-13/JNVY/2026-27/ Date: 29.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Session 2026-27)

Sealed tenders are invited from the reputed firms/ manufactures only for the supply of **(1)** Rice, **(2)** Kirana/ Provision, **(3)** Bakery Items, **(4)** Vegetables, **(5)** Fruits, **(6)** Poultry (Eggs&Chicken), **(7)** Masonary Items (Cement & Hardware Items) **(8)** Electrical Items **(9)** Toilet Items, **(10)** Hair Cutting **(11)** Uniform Washing and Ironing **(12)** Labour Outsourcing details of which are in tender document. Interested Firms/Parties and well-established firms/ manufacturers may obtain the tender schedule with conditions and specifications from this office by paying Rs.200/- (Each) cash or Payment of Rs.200/- through DD/ online transfer to the Principal, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Chikkaballapura at Yenigadale, during the office hours on any working day **from 30.04.2026 to 20.05.2026 between 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.** The sealed tender document should be submitted **on or before 05.00 pm on 20.05.2026.The date of Tender Opening is 21.05.2026 at 11.00 am** in the Vidyalaya premises.

Sd/- PRINCIPAL, JNV-CHIKKABALLAPURA
DIPR/CHIKKABALLAPURA/RO:45/KSMCA/2026-27

UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, BANGALORE
NAAC A Accredited
Estate Office, Naik Bhavan, GKVK, Bengaluru-560 065
Ph : 2330153-250 / Direct : 23332765
Website : www.uasbangalore.edu.in E-mail : eo@uasbangalore.edu.in

No.EO/SPO/e-Proc/1/2026-27 Date: 27.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-procurement portal only)

The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru has invited Tender in the prescribed form as per the Standard tender document KG-1, and KG-2, from the reputed firms for the procurement of Equipment's.

Blank Tender Documents can be downloaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in, **Last date and time for uploading the tender on 12.05.2026 up to 4.00 p.m. The Technical bid will be opened on 14.05.2026 at 10.30 a.m. The Financial bid will be opened on 18.05.2026 at 10.30 a.m.** in the tender committee room of estate office. further details can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours and also refer UAS Website: www.uasbangalore.edu.in Help desk-09240214000/09240214001 support@eprochelpdesk.com. The University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.

DIPR/CP/440/AKAR/2026-27 **Sd/-**
Estate Officer

Manipur violence: SC orders forensic probe of audio clip linked to ex-CM

NFSU told to analyse recording & compare voice samples with that of Biren Singh

N Biren Singh

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) in Gujarat to examine an audio clip allegedly linking former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh to the ethnic violence in the northeastern state.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and K Vinod Chandran issued the direction after advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioner, Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust, an NGO, argued that they were placing on record the complete audio clip, which was more than two hours long.

The court directed the NFSU to analyse the recording and compare the voice sample with the admitted voice samples of Singh.

Bhushan stated that the full audio clip has been copied onto a pen drive from the original device.

"The said pen drive, being the first copy of the original, shall be furnished to the other side, to be forwarded to the NFSU for comparison with the admitted voice recordings of the individual concerned," the SC ordered.

On January 7, the court ordered a forensic examination of a 48-minute audio recording, which, the NGO alleged, pointed to Singh's role in the 2023 ethnic violence in Manipur. It had directed that the entire available leaked audio be forwarded to the NFSU for forensic examination.

It had also asked the NFSU to expedite the process and submit the final report in a sealed cover. The court said the audio clips in question should be examined to determine whether they were modified, edited or tampered with in any manner.

It had also directed the NFSU to assess whether the voice in the disputed audio clips matched the voice in the admitted clips, and to give a clear finding on whether the same person was speaking in all of them.

TWO-HOUR CLIP

- SC directs voice match with admitted samples
- Petitioner NGO submits two-hour clip
- Court insists full audio be sent for forensic test
- Earlier 48-minute clip already under examination
- Court seeks clarity on tampering, editing of clips

NIA arrests prime accused in Manipur SDPO killing

GUWAHATI, DHNS: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested the "prime accused" in the killing of Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Chingtham Anandakumar Singh at Moreh, a border town in strife-torn Manipur, in 2023.

In a statement, the NIA said the accused, Otkhothang Baite alias Othang Baite, a resident of Moreh in Tengnoupal district, was involved in the conspiracy behind the attack by members of a suspected Kuki militant group on a district police team at a playground. Baite belongs to the Kuki community.

The militants had opened fire on the district police team on October 31, 2023, during the peak of the conflict between the Meitei and Kuki communities. Singh, a Meitei, was struck by a bullet in the stomach and later succumbed to his injuries.

Police at Moreh had registered a case, which was later handed over to the NIA in March 2024."

The NIA said that the conspiracy was aimed at creating terror in Manipur. The agency had earlier this month arrested another accused, Kamginthang Gangte, in connection with the case.

The killing had triggered protests in the Meitei-dominated Valley, demanding action against the assailants.

Moreh, a Kuki-dominated trade centre on the Myanmar border, witnessed large-scale violence in 2023. Meiteis fled the town and took shelter in the Valley, and they have not yet returned to Moreh.

Top court flags airfare surge, directs Centre to file affidavit

NEW DELHI, DHNS

"You file an affidavit and place everything on record. Why can't you file an affidavit? What is this stand of the Union? Three times we have granted you time"

The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the Central government for not filing an affidavit in response to a plea seeking regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta asked the Central government to file an application along with an affidavit explaining why the affidavit had not been filed and why further time was sought for it.

During the hearing, the counsel for petitioner S Laxminarayanan — a social activist — submitted that the Central government had not filed its reply despite earlier directions.

The government's counsel, however, cited the evolving situation in West Asia as a reason for the delay.

On this, the bench asked, "What is this? What prevents you from filing an affidavit?"

The counsel also submitted that rules were under consideration.

The bench, however, told the counsel, "You file an affidavit and place everything on record. Why can't you file an affidavit? What is this stand of the Union? Three times we have granted you time."

The court also refused to grant three weeks' time for the purpose and said the affidavit should be filed next week.

"We are not willing to accept the request. Let an appropriate application, along with an affidavit giving reasons for why affidavit has not been filed and why further time is being sought, be filed within a week. List again on May 11," the bench said.

On November 17 last year, the court sought responses from the Central government and others on a plea that sought a robust and independent regulator that ensured transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector.

4 dead, 15 rescued as tourist boat overturns in Bargi dam reservoir in MP

JABALPUR, PTI: Four persons died and 15 others were rescued after a river cruise boat carrying 29 passengers overturned in the Bargi dam reservoir after encountering a sudden storm on Thursday in Jabalpur district, an official said.

Ten tourists were still missing, and an operation was on in full swing to trace and rescue them, he said.

A total of 29 tickets were issued for the cruise in the Bargi dam reservoir, and among them, four people drowned, while 15 were rescued, the official said.

A search and rescue operation for the missing passengers was continuing on a war footing. The Jabalpur collector and Superintendent of Police, along with SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) and other rescue teams, are present at the site, the official said.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said the local administration and rescue personnel were continuing their operation after the tragic cruise boat accident in the Bargi dam due to a severe storm.

PWD minister Rakesh Singh termed the incident as most unfortunate. He said the CM has announced compensation of Rs 4 lakh each to kin of deceased.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

WE'D LIKE TO PLAN A BANQUET FOR OUR SKI CLUB
I LOVE YOUR SKI OUTFITS... YOU LOOK GREAT!
ARE YOU PROFESSIONAL SKIERS?
OH NO...IN FACT, MOST OF OUR CLUB HAVEN'T EVEN MADE IT OFF THE BUNNY SLOPE YET!
BUT THE #1 RULE OF SKIING IS TO LOOK GOOD!
AND WE DO LOOK GOOD!

Hagar The Horrible

HOW CAN YOU SIT THERE WHILE YOU SEE ME WORKING SO HARD DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF YOU?!
ARE YOU TELLING ME TO REARRANGE THE FURNITURE ?!

Beetle Bailey

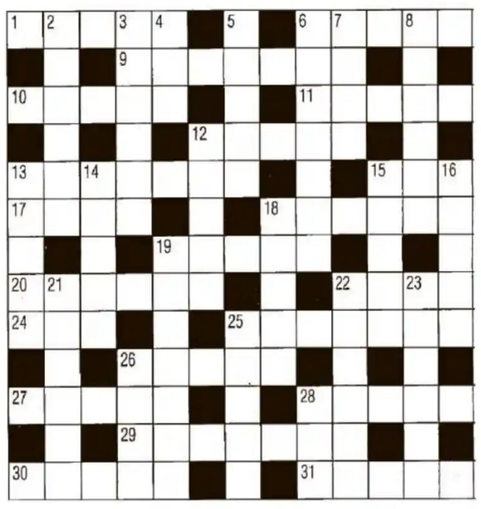
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BOTHERING HIM TODAY
WHAT IS HE DOING ?
HE'S SCRATCHING HIS SKULL
IT'S DEFINITELY NOT DANDRUFF
GREG TMORT WALKER

Peanuts

I'M LATE FOR A MEETING AT SCHOOL
YOU'LL HAVE TO FIX YOUR OWN SUPPER..
HERE'S A CAN OF DOG FOOD, YOUR DISH, A CAN OPENER AND A SPOON... GOOD LUCK!
HELP!

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12407



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Goodies entrance (5)
6 Encouragement to learn the tango? (5)
9 Corrected by the proper editor (7)
10 His name isn't exactly an alias (5)
11 Operative a long time with the National Trust (5)
12 All too familiar contribution to nasty bitterness (5)
13 The stopgap I'm going to bury (7)
15 Ripe peaches can give you energy (3)
17 A good one means plenty (4)
18 Smooth as a passage can be, as we hear (6)
19 Supporter of the president (5)
20 What to do when the bus is on fire (6)
22 Cost of travel in the Far East (4)
24 Thus left, through his angle's so right? (3)
25 Cooked up by a bighead? (7)
26 A fun outing on a German river (5)
27 Act it differently, merely in mime (5)
28 Directed me to help out (5)
29 Superlatively expensive honey (7)
30 It's no end discouraging (5)
31 Down to earth American rotters (5)

DOWN
2 There's nil, perhaps, in one that's computerised (2,4)
3 Go right, a little way, in extremes in turmoil (6)
4 One man's island at Holyhead (3)
5 One lucky to be a church member? (5)
6 Does she nominally tell you what to do when she's cold? (7)
7 In unspecified generalizations, it's marginal (4)
8 Can the cheese maker raise a tenner with it? (6)
12 The right rhyme for sozzled (5)
13 Thoughtful things possibly said about an egghead (5)
14 Language suitable for a letter to Mali (5)
15 Standard Anglo-Saxon soldiers (5)
16 Contemplated post office red (5)
18 A certain capacity for having left it again (5)
19 In the book, where a bloke gets a half a bitter (7)
21 To lace in position? (6)
22 In punishment, it's not endless (6)
23 Show what is heartfelt about a piece of verse (6)
25 By going round always boozy (5)
26 A team's wing (4)
28 A hush in the wood (3)

ACROSS
1 Male deer (5)
6 Cook in the oven (5)
9 Checked (7)
10 Filth (5)
11 Frivolous (5)
12 Man's name (5)
13 Perception (7)
15 Animal doctor (3)
17 Tidy (4)
18 Explain (6)
19 Sacked (5)
20 Share (6)
22 Metal fastener (4)
24 Previous day (3)
25 Iterates (7)
26 Prise (5)
27 Dairy product (5)
28 Warehouse (5)
29 Mobile home (7)
30 Number (5)
31 Encounters (5)

DOWN
2 Royal seat (6)
3 Opening move (6)
4 Prosecute (3)
5 Aviator (5)
6 Lived (7)
7 Norse god (4)
8 Morose (6)
12 Series (5)
13 Habituate (5)
14 Fry (5)
15 View (5)
16 Nurses (5)
18 Postpone (5)
19 Supervisor (7)
21 Opposed (6)
22 Calm (6)
23 Extreme (6)
25 Ease (5)
26 Decorous material (4)
28 Barrier (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12406

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 4, Misery 7, Man-I-toba 8, Cha-in-s. 10, S-te-WS 13, Shop 14, H-U-la 15, A-tom 16, Job 17, I-ago 19, I'm-AM 21, After-glow 23, Mist(akes) 24, May-O 26, He-m 27, A-bel 29, Cr.-AB 32, Scud 33, White 34, S-tack-s 35, Handmaid 36, Brandy.
DOWN: 1, Smas-h 2, Angel 3, Otis 4, Mac-Ho. 5, Snap 6, Random 9, Ho-mi-ly 11, Tut 12, Waifs 13, Stormed 15, Age 16, Ja-W 18, At-tack 20, Moo-CH 21, AI-M 22, Gal 23, Men-tor 25, Pat 28, Bushy 30, (ar)Rival 31, Beady 32, Scan 33, Wide.

EASY
ACROSS: 4, Toss up 7, Innuendo 8, Tremor 10, Trial 13, Veer 14, Sell 15, Temp 16, Dig 17, Icon 19, Asia 21, Aborigine 23, Iris 24, Sure 26, Roc 27, Spot 29, Alas 32, Fern 33, Skill 34, Pirate 35, Evidence 36, Lesson.
DOWN: 1, Gifts 2, Snail 3, Deal 4, Totem 5, Seer 6, Utopia 9, Repair 11, Red 12, Alibi 13, Venison 15, Tor 16, Die 18, Cosset 20, Sneak 21, Arc 22, Gut 23, Iodine 25, Val 28, Preen 30, Lions 31, Sleep 32, Fans 33, Side.

◆SU-DO-KU-6894◆

9					6		4	
	2							5
1				9		6		
	1			4		8		
		3	8		2	1		
		4		3			6	
		1		5				7
8							2	
	3		7					8

hard

SOLUTION TO 6893

1	2	8	9	3	5	6	7	4
5	6	7	4	2	8	1	9	3
4	9	3	1	6	7	5	8	2
3	8	1	5	9	4	2	6	7
2	5	4	6	7	3	9	1	8
9	7	6	8	1	2	4	3	5
8	3	9	2	5	6	7	4	1
6	4	5	7	8	1	3	2	9
7	1	2	3	4	9	8	5	6

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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							RACK 1
I1	S1	D2	H4	L1	E1	L1	
							RACK 2
E1	U1	M3	S1	P3	L1	A1	4th Letter Triple
							RACK 3
E1	I1	R1	V4	T1	D2	C3	1st Letter Double
							RACK 4
P3	T1	S1	P3	O1	R1	U1	

PAR SCORE 165-175
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YEATERDAY'S SOLUTION

E1	F4	F4	A1	C3	E1		RACK 1 =	14
U1	R1	C3	H4	I1	N1		RACK 2 =	33
S1	U1	B3	S1	E1	T1		RACK 3 =	10
A1	D2	J8	U1	S1	T1	S1	RACK 4 =	65
							JUDD'S TOTAL	122

PAR SCORE 80-90

JUMBLE®

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

OTDSO

NRPIT

FIVRYE

BULOED

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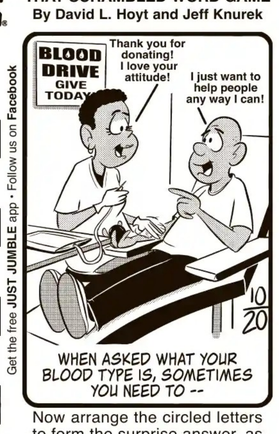
THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek


BLOOD DRIVE GIVE TODAY
Thank you for donating! I love your attitude!
I just want to help people any way I can!
10/20
WHEN ASKED WHAT YOUR BLOOD TYPE IS, SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO --

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SKIMP LIGHT CANNON UNWIND
Answer: The servers couldn't get the pancakes out fast enough, and orders were — STACKING UP

HITORI-3348

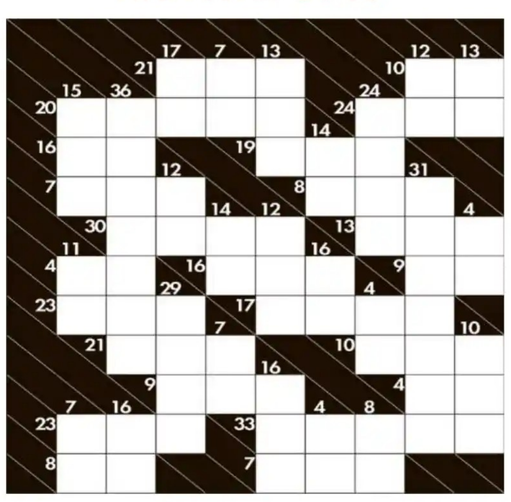
4	4	2	5	7	4	8	2
4	6	5	3	7	2	7	1
2	1	8	2	4	1	3	5
1	2	7	7	6	4	7	3
7	3	6	4	8	2	7	7
8	2	3	2	2	5	4	7
3	7	1	8	2	8	5	7
7	8	1	6	1	7	2	4

SOLUTION TO 3347

2	7	3	6	8	5	1	4
7	■	2	8	3	■	4	■
6	4	■	3	■	2	■	8
■	6	5	■	7	4	8	1
5	■	4	1	■	7	■	6
3	2	6	■	1	8	7	■
■	8	■	4	6	■	3	2
8	3	7	5	4	1	2	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

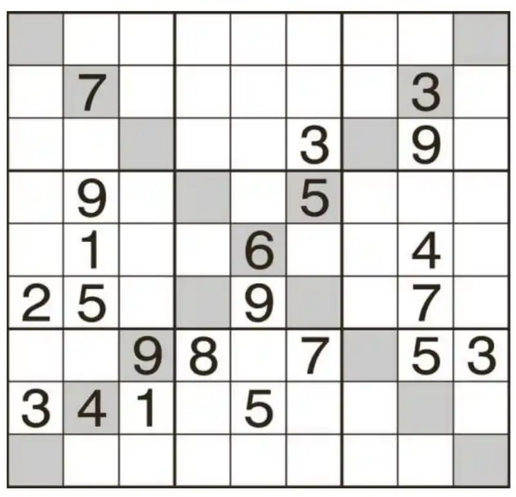
KAKURO- 3348



SOLUTION TO 3347

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3902



SOLUTION TO 3901

4	1	5	3	6	8	2	9	7
3	9	2	1	7	5	6	8	4
6	7	8	4	9	2	1	3	5
7	5	9	2	8	4	3	1	6
8	6	1	5	3	7	4	2	9
2	4	3	9	1	6	5	7	8
9	3	6	8	5	1	7	4	2
1	2	7	6	4	9	8	5	3
5	8	4	7	2	3	9	6	1

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Nepal Airlines apologises over map showing J&K as part of Pak

KATHMANDU, PTI: Nepal Airlines on Thursday apologised for what it described as cartographic inaccuracies after a furore over a "network map" showing Jammu and Kashmir as part of Pakistan.

The airline deleted the social media post on Wednesday following the backlash.

"We sincerely apologise for the error in the network map recently shared on our social media channels. The map contained significant cartographic inaccuracies regarding international boundaries that do not reflect the official stance of Nepal or Nepal Airlines," it said in a post on X.

"We have immediately removed the post and are conducting an internal review to ensure our materials meet the highest standards of accuracy.

"We deeply value our strong relationships with our neighbours and friends in the region and regret any offence the post has caused," the airline added.

Former Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi arrives at a school in Kawhmu, Yangon. REUTERS FILE

Suu Kyi to be moved to house arrest

YANGON, AFP: Myanmar's junta chief-turned president on Thursday ordered that deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi be moved to house arrest, five years after she was detained in a 2021 coup that ended her elected government.

A statement from the office of Min Aung Hlaing said he had "commuted the remaining sentence" of the 80-year-old Suu Kyi "to be served at a designated residence".

It was not immediately clear where she would be moved. However, a senior source from her dissolved National League for Democracy party told AFP she would likely be kept at a residence in the capital, Naypyidaw. "We do not know exactly where it is," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity for security reasons, adding that access to her is expected to remain tightly restricted.

Min Aung Hlaing led the coup against Suu Kyi as military chief, triggering a civil war that continues to grip the country. He was sworn in as Myanmar's civilian president this month after a tightly controlled election that excluded her party and most opposition groups.

Iran's supreme leader vows to protect nuclear programme

Khamenei strikes defiant tone as US pressure mounts over Strait of Hormuz

DUBAI, AP/PTI

Iran's Supreme Leader said on Thursday that the Islamic Republic will protect its "nuclear and missile capabilities" as national assets, signalling a hard line as US President Donald Trump presses for a broader deal to stabilise the war's fragile three-week ceasefire.

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei maintained the defiant tone he has adopted since taking over as supreme leader following the killing of his father in the war's opening airstrikes.

In a written statement read by a state television anchor, Khamenei — who has not been seen in public since assuming office — said the only place Americans belonged in the Persian Gulf was "at the bottom of its waters" and that a "new chapter" was being written in the region's history.

His remarks come as Iran's oil industry faces pressure from a US Navy blockade preventing its tankers from reaching international markets. At the same time, the global economy is under strain as Iran maintains its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of the world's crude oil is transported.

On Thursday, the global benchmark Brent crude traded as high as USD 126 a barrel.

The disruption to oil supplies and prices is increasing pressure on Trump, who on Thursday floated a new plan to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Under the proposal, the US would continue its blockade of Iranian ports while coordinating with allies to impose higher costs on Iran's efforts to disrupt the free flow of energy, according to a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to comment publicly. The official added that it was one of several diplomatic and policy options under consideration. With a fragile ceasefire in place, the US and Iran remain locked in a standoff over the strait. The US blockade is intended to prevent Iran from selling its oil, depriving it of revenue and potentially forcing it to shut down production due to storage constraints.

The strait's closure would also pose problems for US allies in the Gulf, which rely on the waterway to export oil and gas. A recent Iranian proposal would delay negotiations on the country's nuclear programme. Trump has said one of the main reasons for the war was to deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons. Iran has long maintained its programme is peaceful, though it has enriched uranium to near weapons-grade levels of 60%.

Pakistan on Thursday said it was continuing to facilitate indirect talks between the US and Iran aimed at easing tensions, while also encouraging direct communication between the two sides. "If the two parties can engage in real-time conversations, that could ease sticking points," said Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Tahir Andrabi at a weekly briefing.

Iranian soldiers stand before a portrait of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei during a rally in Tehran on Wednesday to show solidarity and support for the new leader. AFP

Putin offered to handle Iran's uranium: Trump

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI: President Donald Trump said Russian President Vladimir Putin, during a phone call on Wednesday, renewed his offer for Russia to act as a third party to handle Iran's 970 pounds of enriched uranium, which the US leader has demanded Tehran must surrender.

"He told me he'd like to be involved with the enrichment — if he can help us manage it," Trump said, referring to Putin. "I said I would much rather have you involved in ending the war with Ukraine. To me, that would be more important."

US Prez faces war powers deadline

WASHINGTON, REUTERS: US President Donald Trump faces a deadline on Friday to end the Iran war or make the case to Congress for extending it. However, the date is likely to pass without altering the course of the conflict.

Ending the war appears highly unlikely. Instead, analysts and congressional aides expect Trump either to notify Congress of a 30-day extension or to disregard the deadline, with his administration arguing that the ceasefire effectively marks an end to hostilities.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Visitors view robotic dogs with silicone heads modelled after Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg and others, at the interactive art installation in Berlin on Thursday. REUTERS

UK government raises terror threat level to 'severe'

▸ The UK's terror threat level was on Thursday raised from "substantial" to "severe", meaning an attack is highly likely, following antisemitic stabbings in north-west London, PTI reports from London.

The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, an intelligence body linked to the UK's security services that assesses threats, said the upgrade was not based solely on Wednesday's attack in Golders Green. It said the threat level had been rising for some time, driven by an increase in Islamist and extreme right-wing threats from individuals and small groups within the UK.

"Today, the national threat level has increased to 'severe', which means a terrorist attack is considered highly likely," said UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood. "I know this will be a source of concern to many, particularly among our Jewish community, who have suffered so much. "The government has announced a significant increase in investment to protect our Jewish communities, with record funding for policing and security at synagogues, schools and community centres," she said. The threat level had previously been "substantial", meaning an attack was likely.

Musk clashes with OpenAI lawyer

▸ Elon Musk sparred with a lawyer for OpenAI on Thursday over whether he had reviewed emails and documents discussing the company's transition to a for-profit model, as he was cross-examined in a trial that could shape the future of the ChatGPT maker, Reuters reports from Oakland.

William Savitt, a lawyer for OpenAI, Altman and Brockman, pressed Musk on whether he had read a term sheet that Altman sent on August 31, 2017, outlining the shift from a nonprofit to a for-profit entity overseen by a nonprofit. "My testimony is I didn't read the fine print, just the headline," Musk said, dressed in a dark suit, tie and white shirt. At times, Musk expressed frustration with the cross-examination. "Few answers are going to be complete, especially when you cut me off all the time," he said.

Israel intercepts Gaza-bound aid flotilla near Crete

Activists detained as tensions persist despite ceasefire

ATHENS, AP/PTI

Activists sailing on dozens of boats in an attempt to break Israel's maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip and deliver humanitarian aid said Israeli forces intercepted them overnight from Wednesday into Thursday, detaining the crews while the flotilla was sailing near the southern Greek island of Crete.

The Global Sumud Flotilla set sail earlier this month from Barcelona.

Organisers have said more than 70 boats and 1,000 people from around the world would participate, with additional vessels joining as the flotilla sailed east across the Mediterranean.

The attempt comes less than a year after Israeli authorities foiled another effort by the activist group to reach Gaza.

"Israel's actions ... mark a dangerous and unprecedented escalation, the abduction of civilians in the middle of the Mediterranean, over 600 miles from Gaza, in full view of the world," the group said in a press release.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said in a post on X that it was taking about 175 activists from more than 20 boats participating in the flotilla to Israel.

A CCTV footage shows crew members of the flotilla that sailed from Barcelona as the vessel is intercepted by the Israeli Army off the coast of Greece on Thursday. REUTERS

Hezbollah adopts new weapon against Israel

Hezbollah has launched a new weapon against Israel in the latest round of fighting: small drones controlled with fibre-optic cables the width of dental floss that avoid electronic detection, AP/PTI reports from Tel Aviv.

These drones — used widely in the war in Ukraine — are small, hard to track and potentially lethal. Many drones are susceptible to electronic jamming by air defences, which can cause them to crash or return to their point of origin. However, fibre-optic drones are not controlled remotely. They are connected to an operator by a thin cable, making them immune to electronic jamming.

Mamdani to urge King Charles to return Koh-i-Noor

NEW YORK, PTI: New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said he would encourage King Charles III to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond.

"If I was to speak to the King separately from that, I would probably encourage him to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond," Mamdani said before meeting the British monarch. Mamdani was asked what he would say to the King, who was visiting New York City on the second day of his State Visit to the US.

ARTEFACT REPATRIATION

US returns 657 antiquities worth nearly $14 million to India

NEW YORK, PTI

The US has returned 657 antiquities collectively valued at nearly $14 million to India, saying there is "more work to be done" to bring back stolen artefacts.

The return was announced by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg on Tuesday. The items were recovered following several investigations into trafficking networks, including those linked to disgraced art dealer Subhash Kapoor and convicted trafficker Nancy Wiener.

They were handed over at an event attended by Consul Rajlakshmi Kadam from the Consulate General of India in New York.

"The scale of the trafficking networks that targeted cultural heritage in India is massive, as demonstrated by the return of more than 600 pieces today," Bragg said in a statement. "There is unfortunately more work to be done to return stolen artefacts to India, and I thank our team for their persistent efforts."

Consul General of India in New York, Binaya Pradhan, appreciated the sustained cooperation of the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, the US Department of Homeland Security and other law enforcement agencies, whose "continued vigilance," he said, "made the recovery and return of these culturally significant artefacts possible."

Among the returned items is a $2 million bronze figure of Avalokiteshvara, seated on an inscribed double-lotus base above a lion-flanked throne. The inscription identifies the craftsman as Dronaditya of Sipur, near present-day Raipur in Chhattisgarh. The Avalokiteshvara was part of a large hoard of bronzes discovered near the Lakshmana Temple in 1939 and had entered the collection of the Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum in Raipur by 1952.

The statue was stolen from the museum and smuggled into the US by 1982, eventually ending up in a private collection in New York by 2014. It was located and seized from that collection by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in 2025. Another item is a sandstone figure of a dancing Ganesha, looted from a temple in Madhya Pradesh in 2000 by one of Kapoor's indicted co-conspirators, Ranjeet Kanwar.

Convicted Indian-origin man faces deportation

OTTAWA, PTI: An Indian-origin man sentenced to 18 months in prison for abducting a child in Canada faces possible deportation to his home country after completing his jail term, according to a report.

Manoj Govindbalunikam, 37, was sentenced earlier this month for abducting a child in Thessalon in 2023. Justice Michael Varpio delivered the decision on April 21.

Govindbalunikam pleaded guilty to the charges, while his lawyer sought a conditional discharge to help him avoid deportation to India, the report said. However, it was argued that a prison term of six months or more would render him inadmissible under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, making him liable for deportation.

National Sugar Institute

Kanpur - 208017

An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Institute

(A Premier Institute of Government of India)

Admission Notice- 2026

National Sugar Institute, Kanpur, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India for following Courses invites applications from eligible candidates who wish to seek admission for the academic session 2026-27.

SL. No.	Course offered	Eligibility	No. of Seats	Mode of Selection
1	P.G. Diploma Course of Associateship of National Sugar Institute in Sugar Technology [ANSI (ST)]	B.Sc. with Chemistry. Physics & Mathematics or Bachelor's Degree in Chemical. Engineering or B.Sc. (Sugar Science & Technology) awarded by SNSI Belgavi or Graduation in Food Technology	66	Admission Test
2	P.G. Diploma Course of Associateship of National Sugar Institute in Sugar Engineering (ANSI (SE)]	Bachelor's Degree or A.M.I.E.(from The Institutions of Engineers, India) in Mechanical/ Production/ Electrical/ Electrical & Electronic/ Electronics & Instrumentation/ Electronics/ Instrumentation/ Electrical & Electronics/ Applied Electronics & Instrumentation/ Electronics & Communication/ Instrumentation & Control	62*	Admission Test
3	P. G. Diploma Course in Industrial Fermentation and Alcohol Technology[DIFAT]	B.Sc. with Chemistry / Applied Chemistry / Industrial Chemistry / Bio-Chemistry as one of the subject or B.Tech. in Bio-Technology/ Chemical Engg. or Bio-Chemical Engg.	50	Admission Test
4	P.G. Diploma Course in Sugarcane Productivity & Maturity Management [DSPMM]	B.Sc. Agriculture	20	Admission Test
5	P. G. Diploma Course in Quality Control And Environmental Science [DQCES]	B.Sc. with Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics or Zoology, Botany, Chemistry / B.Sc. with Environmental Science/B.Sc. (Bio-Technology) or / B.Tech (Bio-Technology).	22	Admission Test
6	Sugar Boiling Certificate Course [SBCC]	Matriculate/ High School with Science/ Agriculture Exp:- One season (of minimum 90 days) experience of pan-operation in a vacuum pan sugar factory along with nomination	63	Admission Test
7	Certificate Course in Quality Control [CCQC]	12th Standard in Science (Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics)	30	Admission Test
8	Fellowship of N.S.I. in Sugar Technology or Sugar Chemistry	A.N.S.I. (Sugar Tech.) / AVSI (Sugar Tech.)	**Note:** Application for F.N.S.I. in Sugar Technology & Sugar Engineering should be sponsored by a sugar factory / allied unit for carrying out the research pertaining to this course. Similarly, application for F.N.S.I. in Fermentation Technology should be sponsored by a distillery or brewery industry or allied unit for carrying out the research work pertaining to this course.	As per requirement	Personal Interview
9	Fellowship of A.N.S.I. in Sugar Engineering	A.N.S.I. (Sugar Engg.) / AVSI (Sugar Engg.)			
10	Fellowship of A.N.S.I. in Fermentation Technology	D.I.F.A.T. / I.F.A.T. from VSI			

*Executive ANSI (SE) - 5 seats -Candidates with 5 years experience after SECC in Sugar Factory will be admitted without entrance exam, Priority will be given based on academic and professional credits.
ANSI (SE) - 57 seats - Mechanical Engineering: Electrical Engineering: Instrumentation Engineering = 70:15:15

For courses at Sl. No 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 7 above, final year appearing candidates may also apply.

For applying On-line, visit our website at http://nsi.gov.in and follow the instructions.

For reservation of seats in different courses- refer N.S.I. prospectus.

IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT	
On-line submission of application forms (Indian & Foreign Candidates)	From 16th April,2026 onwards
Last date for submission of on-line Applications (Indian & Foreign Candidates)	25th May, 2026 upto 5:00 PM
Application Fee -For all candidates except SC/ST	Rs. 1500/-
Application Fee - for SC/ST Candidates	Rs. 1000/-
Application fee should be made through Online Transaction	**Account Name:** NSI KANPUR Account No: 10298336082 IFSC Code: SBIN0001962 Account Type: Current Account Bank Name: State Bank of India
Downloading of Admit Cards from website by Indian applicants	01st June, 2026 onwards
Admission Test Center (Only for Indian Candidates)	7th June, 2026 (Sunday) at Pune, Chennai, Delhi, Kanpur, Kolkata, Patna, Gorakhpur, Meerut, Bhopal etc. (tentative)
Address for Correspondence	Director, National Sugar Institute, Kalyanpur, Kanpur-208017, India
For further details and Prospectus visit website:	https://nsi.gov.in. Contact us: nsikanpur@nic.in

NOTE- All rights for change in the above schedule and examination centres are reserved with the Institute and can be made any time without giving any notice to anyone.

CBC-08202-12-0001-2627

Biz Bytes

Reliance Retail buys Priyanka Chopra's brand

NEW DELHI, PTI: Reliance Retail on Thursday announced the acquisition of Anomaly, a global hair-care brand promoted by Bollywood actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas, for an undisclosed amount.

It has acquired 'Anomaly' trademarks and digital assets and has plans to scale up through its omni-channel retail network and its beauty platform Tira, Reliance Retail said in a statement.

Founded by Priyanka in 2021, Anomaly is a vegan, high-performance hair-care brand offered at an accessible price-point. She will continue to play an integral role in the brand's evolution as Creative Director.

IDBI Bank Q4 net slips 5% to Rs 1,943 crore

NEW DELHI, PTI: IDBI Bank on Thursday reported a 5% decline in net profit to Rs 1,943 crore for the March quarter of FY2025-26.

The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 2,051 crore in the year-ago period.

Its net profit was impacted by a fall in operating profit to Rs 3,043 crore from Rs 3,195 crore a year ago.

However, its total income rose to Rs 9,409 crore in the period under review from Rs 9,035 crore in January-March of the preceding fiscal.

At the same time, interest income increased to Rs 7,798 crore during the period under review from Rs 6,979 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. The net interest income in the quarter also improved to Rs 3,851 crore compared to Rs 3,290 crore in Q4 FY25.

'Amazon Now orders growing 25% MoM'

NEW DELHI, PTI: Amazon's quick commerce service 'Amazon Now' is witnessing a 25% month-on-month growth in orders in India, Amazon President and Chief Executive Officer Andy Jassy said.

"We continue to expand our ultra-fast delivery service, Amazon Now, which offers delivery in 30 minutes or less on thousands of items," Jassy told investors during the company's first-quarter earnings call for 2026.

Amazon reported $181.5 billion in net sales, a 17% increase year-over-year. Its operating income increased to $23.9 billion in the first quarter of 2026, compared with $18.4 billion in the first quarter of 2025.

Gold rebounds Rs 2,000 on weak dollar

NEW DELHI, PTI: Gold prices rebounded by Rs 2,000 to Rs 1.54 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, tracking firm trends in global markets and a weak US dollar.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9% purity jumped Rs 2,000, or 1.31%, to Rs 1,54,800 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 1,52,800 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Crude oil futures jump to record Rs 10,571 per barrel

Stalled negotiations between the US and Iran fuel rally

NEW DELHI, PTI

Crude oil prices jumped by Rs 445 to hit a record Rs 10,571 per barrel in futures trade on Thursday, with Brent breaching $126 a barrel in global markets amid reports that US President Donald Trump is weighing military options against Iran.

On the Multi-Commodity Exchange, crude oil for May delivery jumped by Rs 445, or 4.39%, to touch a fresh high of Rs 10,571 per barrel, extending gains for the fourth straight session.

Analysts said the rise in oil prices came on the back of reports of a possible military briefing for President Trump on options for action against Iran, raising concerns about further escalation in West Asia.

The briefing signals that Trump was considering major combat operations either to break the deadlock in negotiations or deliver a final blow before ending the war, the reports said.

Globally, Brent oil futures for the June contract extended its gains for the ninth consecutive session, rising by $4.73, or 3.89%, to hit an intra-day high of $126.41 per barrel — a level last seen on March 8, 2022.

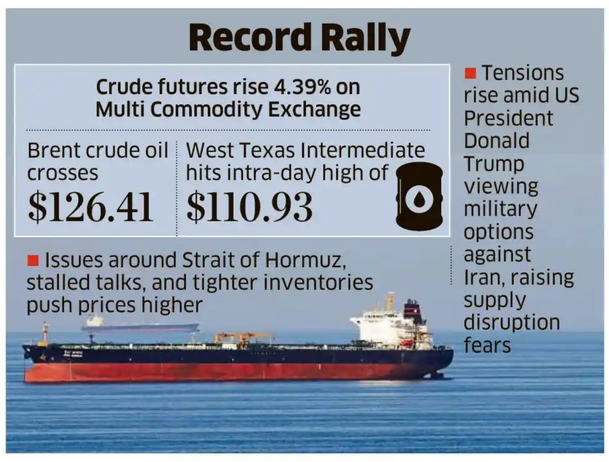
West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for the same contract also appreciated by $4.05, or 3.79%, to hit an intra-day high of $110.93 a barrel in New York.

Market experts said the rally was also fuelled by stalled ceasefire negotiations between the US and Iran, and the surprise exit of the UAE from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Earlier, Trump had rejected Tehran's latest proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, indicating the naval blockade would stay in place until a nuclear agreement is reached.

Brokerage firm Kotak Securities, in a note, said escalating US pressure on Iran, including potential extension of a naval blockade and stricter enforcement actions on tanker movements, has heightened concerns over constrained flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

Additional support came from a sharp 6.2 million barrel draw in US crude inventories and declines in refined product stocks, signalling resilient demand, the brokerage firm said.


Record Rally
Crude futures rise 4.39% on Multi Commodity Exchange
Brent crude oil crosses $126.41
West Texas Intermediate hits intra-day high of $110.93
Issues around Strait of Hormuz, stalled talks, and tighter inventories push prices higher
Tensions rise amid US President Donald Trump viewing military options against Iran, raising supply disruption fears

Bourses dive 1% as crude prices dent sentiment

MUMBAI, PTI: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1% lower on Thursday, as crude oil prices, weak global trends and foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 582.86 points or 0.75% to settle at 76,913.50. During the day, it plunged 1,237.5 points, or 1.59%, to 76,258.86, but recovered some of the losses in the second half of the session. The 50-share NSE Nifty dived 180.10 points or 0.74% to end at 23,997.55.

Among the 30-Sensex firms, Eternal, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, UltraTech Cement and Mahindra & Mahindra were the major laggards.

HUL Q4 net up 21% on back of higher volumes

Divestment of Nutritionalab stake drives growth

NEW DELHI, PTI

FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) on Thursday reported a 21% increase in March quarter consolidated net profit to Rs 2,994 crore, driven by higher volumes, and gains from the divestment of stake in Nutritionalab.

The company had logged a net profit of Rs 2,475 crore in January-March FY25, according to a regulatory filing from HUL.

HUL reported an exceptional gain of Rs 247 crore in the March quarter. This includes Rs 256 crore profit from the sale of a stake in Nutritionalab (the parent company of Wellbeing Nutrition) to USV, and an adjustment of Rs 9 crore towards acquisition-related liabilities and loss from the sale of property.

Revenue from product sales rose 8.13% to Rs 16,172 crore in March quarter, which was driven by 6% underlying volume growth, according to an earnings statement from HUL.

Advertising and promotion expenses of HUL, which owns popular brands such as Surf Excel, Brooke Bond, Lifebuoy, Dove, Sunsilk, and Lakme was up 6% to Rs 1,509 crore.

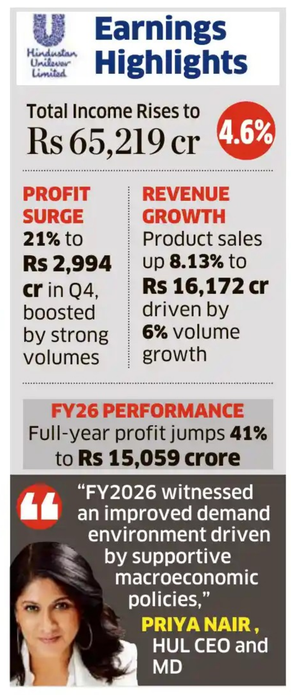
Total expenses in March quarter were at Rs 16,615 crore, a rise of 7.2%. Total income, which includes other income, was up 5.01% to Rs 16,580 crore. This marks the company' highest growth in 12 quarters.

For the entire FY26, HUL reported a profit of Rs 15,059 crore, up 41%, which was helped by exceptional gains. Its profit before exceptional items and tax was at Rs 14,047 crore. Total income rose 4.6% to Rs 65,219 crore.

"FY2026 witnessed an improved demand environment driven by supportive macroeconomic policies," HUL CEO and MD Priya Nair said.

During the year, HUL took decisive actions to accelerate growth, including sharpening the portfolio, scaling investments, strengthening frontline demand generation capabilities, and simplifying the organisation to drive speed, focus, and execution.

"These initiatives resulted in consistent improvement in performance through the year with 8% revenue growth and 7% underlying sales growth in March quarter, translating into 5% underlying sales growth for the financial year," she said.


Earnings Highlights
Total Income Rises to Rs 65,219 cr
4.6%
PROFIT SURGE
21% to Rs 2,994 cr in Q4, boosted by strong volumes
REVENUE GROWTH
Product sales up 8.13% to Rs 16,172 cr driven by 6% volume growth
FY26 PERFORMANCE
Full-year profit jumps 41% to Rs 15,059 crore
"FY2026 witnessed an improved demand environment driven by supportive macroeconomic policies,"
PRIYA NAIR, HUL CEO and MD

Centre slashes Vodafone Idea AGR dues by 27%

NEW DELHI, PTI: In a relief to debt-ridden Vodafone Idea, the government has slashed the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) liability of the telecom company by about 27% to Rs 64,046 crore after reassessing statutory dues, and has allowed a five-year moratorium on these payments.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) had formed a committee to reassess the adjusted gross revenue (AGR), which was fixed at Rs 87,695 crore as of December 31, 2025. The final amount, however, was subject to reassessment by the DoT and final approval by the committee.

Vodafone Idea, in an exchange filing on Thursday, said: "The DoT ... has informed that the Committee formed for the purpose has finalised the AGR dues at Rs 64,046 crore as on 31 December 2025."

The company has to clear final dues in two sets spread over ten years, and the first payment is due after five years. It will need to pay a minimum of Rs 100 crore annually over four years from FY 2031-32 to FY 2034-35 and the remaining amount in six equal instalments annually from FY 2035-36 to FY 2040-41, the filing said.

The company, however, has to make an annual payment of Rs 124 crore towards AGR dues pertaining to FY2018 and FY2019, from March 2026 to March 2031. These dues were not part of the reassessment.

Following reassessment, Vi has to pay a minimum of Rs 100 annually over four years between March 2032 and March 2035. The remaining AGR dues have to be paid in equal instalments annually over six years, i.e. between March 2036 and March 2041 which will be Rs 10,608 crore annually.

The Union Cabinet on December 31 approved a major relief package for Vodafone Idea, freezing its outstanding AGR dues and granting a five-year moratorium on payment in a move to provide a critical lifeline to the beleaguered telco.

The move followed a favourable order VIL got from the Supreme Court, which allowed the government to reconsider and take an appropriate decision with reference to the additional AGR demand raised for the period up to FY2016-2017, and to comprehensively reassess and reconcile all AGR dues, including interest and penalty.

Invest India facilitates $6.1 bn investments in FY26: DPIIT

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Invest India, the national investment promotion and facilitation agency, on Thursday claimed that it facilitated 60 projects worth over $6.1 billion during the financial year ended March 2026.

These investments are spread in 14 states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Assam and Bihar, and are estimated to generate over 31,000 jobs, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia told reporters.

He added that around 42% of the total investment value during the year came from European nations. The US, Japan, South Korea and Australia were the other major source nations for investments during the year.

"India's investment momentum is a direct outcome of policy clarity, institutional commitment, and the trust global investors place in our systems," Bhatia said.

"The $6.1 billion grounded by Invest India in FY2025-26 reflects the strength of the country's regulatory environment and the depth of its economic transformation," he added.

Chemicals, pharmaceuticals & biotechnology, and food processing sectors accounted for nearly 65% of the grounded investments during the year.

Chemicals, pharmaceuticals & biotechnology, and food processing sectors accounted for nearly 65% of the grounded investments during the year. Significant investments also came into emerging sectors like Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM), aerospace & defence, and electric vehicles.

Established destinations such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana, and Delhi continued to anchor major investment inflows, while Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh emerged as key hubs driven by high-value projects. Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh also attracted significant investments.

In terms of employment generation, Madhya Pradesh emerged as the leading state, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Maharashtra.

According to Invest India Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Nivruti Rai, grounded investments in 2025-26 registered nearly threefold growth over the previous year, while the average deal size increased by 1.8 times.

"The threefold growth in grounded investments and the creation of over 31,000 jobs demonstrate the impact of coordinated policy support, institutional agility, and investor confidence," Rai said.

Mphasis posts Q4 net profit of 14% at Rs 510 crore

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru-headquartered mid-tier IT services company Mphasis has reported a 14% jump in consolidated net profit for the quarter ended March 2026 to Rs 509.6 crore, compared to Rs 446.49 crore in the year-ago period. The company's revenue from operations in the March quarter stood at Rs 4,242.66 crore, a 14.35% YoY growth, compared to Rs 3,710.04 crore in the same quarter last year.

The company's new TCV (total contract value) wins stood at $407 million in Q4 FY26, of which 64% is AI-led. Its operating margin for the quarter was 15.4%, growing 10 bps YoY, and net margin for the quarter before exceptional item grew 30 bps sequentially, and remained flat YoY to 12.0%.

"We have delivered on our growth and margin guidance in FY26 and are stepping into FY27 with strong momentum driven by a healthy pipeline and TCV. Our AI-led propositions have gained traction, and we continue to double down on our AI efforts and strengthen the NeoIP suite. Our recent acquisition of Theory and Practice (TAP) creates a combination that allows us to move beyond task automation, towards systems that can reason over business objectives, constraints, and domain context, using AI at scale," said Mphasis Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Nitin Rakesh.

Based on the recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, the Board of Directors of the company has approved the re-appointment of Nitin Rakesh as CEO and MD for a term of five consecutive years, with effect from October 1, 2026.

The company's Banking and Financial Services vertical Direct grew 17.4% YoY, driven by wallet share gains and growth in new wins or accounts. Its insurance vertical continued growth momentum, aided by the continued ramp-up in recent large deal wins.

The Board of Directors have recommended a final dividend of Rs 62 per equity share, and the record date for entitlement of the final dividend will be July 8, 2026.

The company's shares jumped 1.17% and closed at Rs 2,275 on the BSE on Thursday.

FDI easing for foreign cos with up to 10% Chinese stake to be notified under FEMA soon

NEW DELHI, PTI: The decision to allow overseas companies with Chinese shareholding of up to 10% to invest in India under the automatic route will be notified soon under FEMA, a senior official said on Thursday. After that, the changes will come into effect.

In March, the Union Cabinet approved amendments in the press note (PN) 3 of 2020 of the DPIIT, as per which, foreign companies having a Chinese/Hong Kong shareholding of up to 10% will be eligible to invest in India in sectors where FDI is permitted under the automatic route.

However, these relaxed FDI rules will not apply to entities registered in China or Hong Kong or other countries sharing land borders with India.

The government has also decided that FDI proposals in specified sectors or activities of manufacturing in capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot-wafer or any other sector/activity added by the committee of secretaries headed by the Cabinet Secretary will be processed within 60 days.

Although the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has notified these changes, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) has not yet done so.

"The DEA will have to issue the notification under FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act). It will be notified very soon. It requires a lot of fine-tuning," DPIIT Joint Secretary Jai Prakash Shivahare told reporters here. He added that the DPIIT is working to identify sub-sectors whose applications will be processed within 60 days.

Infosys appoints Nitin Paranjpe as non-executive Vice-Chairman

BENGALURU, DHNS: Infosys has appointed HUL non-executive Chairman Nitin Paranjpe as non-executive Vice-Chairman of its Board with immediate effect.

Nitin Paranjpe

The company said the appointment recognises Paranjpe's contribution to the Board. He brings extensive experience as non-executive Chairman of HUL and non-executive Vice-Chairman of Heineken NV. "His expertise has already made a significant impact on the Board, and we look forward to his continued leadership. I will continue as the Chairman of the Board as long as necessary and there is no plan for a chairman transition," said Nandan Nilekani, Chairman of the Board, Infosys.

Also, the firm said it reclassified Shreyas Shibulal and his wife Bhairavi Madhusudhan Shibulal as public shareholders from the promoter category upon their request.

Shreyas is the son of SD Shibulal, a co-founder of Infosys.

In a filing, Infosys said the applicants together held about 0.56% of the equity share capital of the firm as on April 30, 2026.

TOKEN METERING

Cognizant now tracks each employee's personal AI fluency

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Nasdaq-listed IT services company Cognizant is beginning to see the emergence of AI-infused rate cards, where pricing reflects a blended model of human effort and digital effort. During the company's earnings call, Ravi Kumar S, Chief Executive Officer, said that with several clients, they are exposing tokenised rate cards that price work along a continuum from fully human-led discovery to hybrid, to increasingly autonomous agentic delivery.

"This model is intended to turn our outcome-based economics into true partnership that aligns value-creation with shared results," he said.

The firm is increasingly applying token metering at a project or individual level to provide early insights into usage patterns, model management, and optimisation of inference costs.

"Token metering is a reality both at a project level and at an individual level. We have token metering for fixed-price programmes, as well as for time and material. For fixed-price programmes, we have the opportunity to reduce the cost and keep the margin with us," Ravi Kumar said.

To fuel the shift from the traditional pyramid towards interdisciplinary AI-augmented teams, the company has launched an integrated AI skilling stack for its entire organisation. "It begins with our AI builder career programme, which maps every role at Cognizant to a future-ready AI family — job family with defined pathways and targeted learning plans aligned to how work is evolving. This is powered by Cognizant Skillspring, our new AI-native learning platform designed to redefine learning in the AI era and cultivate AI-ready talent at scale for our associates and clients," the CEO said.

The company now tracks progress for each associate's personal AI fluency dashboard, a real-time, context-engineered view of AI readiness across various dimensions, including AI skills and proficiency, training and certification, AI tools and token usage, innovation, and project experience.

Cognizant has introduced Project Leap and Ravi Kumar, in the analyst call, said the programme is designed to accelerate the company's transformation to the operating model of the future by funding investments in AI capabilities and partnerships, integrated offerings and platforms, reshaping productivity, and upskilling workforce.

The CEO also said that they are ahead of the curve, both to take accountability of digital and human labour for "ourselves or if clients want to take the accountability for themselves".

"Time and material comes in two forms: I could take care of digital labour and human labour, and I could take the sizing and the economics of digital labour and create throughput for our clients. This is something evolving, and some clients are already proposing this," he added.

AEL posts loss in fourth qtr

NEW DELHI, PTI: Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), the flagship firm of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate, slipped into a loss in the fourth quarter, hurt by depreciation of its recently-commissioned assets.

Loss of Rs 221 crore in January-March — the fourth quarter of FY2025-26 — compared with a profit of Rs 3,845 crore, a statement said.

For the full FY26, the company posted a handsome 31% rise in net profit to Rs 9,339 crore.

Total income grew 20% in Q4 to Rs 33,187 crore and by 3% in full FY26 to Rs 1.03 lakh crore.

Vishal-ridden Ashwa Kangto clinches main event

DELHI RESULTS

S Nawab-trained Ashwa Kangto, ridden by Vishal, won the Alwidha Plate, the feature event on the last day of the races here on Thursday.

1. The Family Welfare Plate (Div-I) - 1100M: Insta Millionaire (Vishal) 1, O Romeo (Varun) 2, Jet Falcon (S G Prasad) 3, Miss Marmalade (S Mosin) 4. Not Run: Senor. WB: 2 1/2, 3 1/4, 3 1/4. T: 1:06.30. TB: Magan Singh; Fav: O Romeo.

2. The Family Welfare Plate (Div-II) - 1100M: Juggaad (Vishal) 1, Rhapsody In Green (Praveen) 2, Royal Baby (R Rakesh) 3, Jet Thunder (G S Shekhawat) 4. WB: 3/4, 1/2, 3 1/4. T: 1:07.71. TB: Irfan Ali; Fav: Juggaad.

3. The Closing Ceramony Plate - 1200M: Nairobi (Vishal), Salam Bhai (Sameer Qureshi) 2, Tantalising Star (Narender Kr) 3, Dubai Falcon (Aasif Khan) 4. WB: 3/4, 2 1/4, 4 1/4. T: 1:11.68. TB: R Kumar; Fav: Tantalising Star.

4. The Alwidha Plate - 1200M: Ashwa Kangto (Vishal) 1, Golden Sun (Shivam) 2, Robust (R Rakesh) 3, Ashwa Kanchenjunga (K Nazil). Not Run: Angelo, Lodge Keeper, Hukamori, Bhujang and Property Posh. WB: 3 1/4, 2 3/4, 1 1/4. T: 1:10.88. TB: S Nawab; Fav: Ashwa Kangto.

5. The Good Bye - 1200M: Divya Shakthi (Narender Kr) 1, Ashwa Sardar (G S Shekhawat) 2, Miss Boost (S Mosin) 3, Girl Power (Sabdar Shah Khadri) 4. Not Run: Master Bomber and Super Speed. WB: 3/4, 6 1/2, 3 1/4. T: 1-13.10. TB: Irfan Ali ; Fav: Divya Shakthi.

6. The Happy Ending Plate - 1000M: Bison (S Mosin) 1, Master Tornado ((K Nazil) 2, Chieftain (Lave Kumar) 3, Aspasia (Vishal) 4. Not Run: Trending Cruise, Bahadur and Eastern Crown. WB: 2, 1/2, 3. T: 59.32. TB: S M Abbas; Fav: Bison.

Bengaluru dividends:

I race: Rs 17 (w) 10, 12, 10p; Shp: Rs 29; Thp: Rs 27; Fc: Rs 41; Q: Rs 32; Tri: Rs 65 & 37; Exp: Rs 141 & 114.

II race: Rs 15 (w) 10, 18p; Shp: Rs 35; Thp: Rs 44; Fc: Rs 57; Q: Rs 39; Tri: Rs 725 & 123; Exp: Rs 1908 & 736.

III race: Rs 24 (w) 16, 34 p; Shp: Rs 49; Thp: Rs 53; Fc: Rs 145; Q: Rs 59; Tri: Rs 195 & 105; Exp: Rs 576 & 225.

IV race: Rs 16 (w) 10, 10, 14 p; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 29; Fc: Rs 130; Q: Rs 87; Tri: Rs 224 & 76; Exp: Rs 474 & 127.

V race: Rs 14 (w) 13, 11 p; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 18; Fc: Rs 32; Q: Rs 23; Tri: Rs 44 & 20; No Exp in race.

VI race: Rs 24 (w) 11, 19, 11 p; Shp: Rs 50; Thp: Rs 33; Fc: Rs 164; Q: Rs 133; Tri: Rs 379 & 141; Exp: Rs 1020 & 546.

Jackpot: Rs 148 & 30.

Mini-jackpot: Rs 153. **Treble**: Rs 77.

Eagle Eye for feature

BENGALURU SELECTIONS

Pradeep A-trained Eagle Eye, to be ridden by P Trevor, is favoured to win Usha Stud Plate, the feature event of the races on Friday. The first race starts at 3:00 pm.

1. The Camino Plate (Div II) - 1200M: Zayana 1; Tyaaraa2; Rising Form 3.
2. The Epsom Plate (Div II) -1300M: Vibrant Queen 1; Adornment 2; Imperador 3.
3. The Camino Plate (Div I) - 1200M: Agrima 1; Zephyrine 2; Royal Jewel 3.
4. The Pattadakal Plate - 1400M: Thrill Of Brazil 1; Gandolfini 2; El Alamein 3.
5. The International Labour Day Trophy - 1100M: Burevestnik 1; Deep Respect 2; Portieux 3.
6. The Usha Stud Plate - 1400M: Eagle Eye 1; Tolkien 2; Moon Star 3.
7. The Epsom Plate (Div I) - 1300M: Hazel 1; Larissa 2; Rocking Star 3.
Day's best: Burevestnik. **Jackpot:** 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. **Mini jackpot:** 4, 5, 6 & 7. **I treble:** 2, 3 & 4. **II treble:** 5, 6, & 7.

Punith's all-round show powers MUCC to big win

BENGALURU, DHNS: Punith HA followed up his 44-ball 68 (5x4, 3x6) with a five-wicket haul to fashion Malleswaram United Cricket Club's massive 192-run win over Star Cricketers XI in the KSCA IV and V Division Clubs tournament for the YS Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy here.

LOCAL CRICKET

Malleswaram amassed 288/8 in 30 overs on the back of three half-centuries by Pavan Prasad V (61), Rahul B (62) and Punith.

Star Cricketers XI didn't measure up to the task, folding up for 96 in 18.1 overs with Punith claiming 5/26.

Brief scores: Malleswaram United Cricket Club: 288/8 in 30 overs (Pavan Prasad V 61, Rahul B 62, Punith HA 68; Shiva Partha P 2-40) bt Star Cricketers XI: 96 all out in 18.1 overs (Gaurav MV 2-12, Punith HA 5-26). Vasanthanagar Cricketers: 101 all out in 25 overs (Chaman L 29; Manoj R 5-31) bt Palace Orchard Cricket Club: 75 all out in 18.4 overs (Darshan Raja 3-25, Mihran Abdul Rehman 3-29, Dhyaan Aithal 4-13).
United Cricket Club: 307 all out in 49.4 overs (Anas Ahmed 79, Sanjay AK 39, Kishore Naik K 32, Kushal R Manjappa 56; Dev J Patel 3-47, Rohan Kumar 2-54) bt Royal Cricket Club, Chinthamani: 22 all out in 13.5 overs (Suraj TR 6-5, Rohit R 4-8).
Yuvaka Sangha Cricket Club: 89 all out in 27.3 overs (Abhishek Kumar Yadav 5-14, Pratheesh Premdas 2-33, Vishnuraj TP 2-21) lt to Oriental Cricket Club: 90/5 in 15.2 overs (Manish Parasher 30; Mohammed Parvez 2-23).
Seshadripuram PU College: 97/8 in 22 overs (Ayush Samsukha 41; Manish L 2-16, Balaji Srinivasa 2-28, Mithun C 2-6) lt to Seshadripuram College: 100/3 in 7.4 overs (Nishanth V 33, Manish L 41 n.o.; Lalith D 2-50). Dooravani Cricketers (2): 164 all out in 41.3 overs (Naveen S 65; Kishan BS 3-33, Vikas VB 2-19, S Charan 2-32) lt to Young Challenging Cricket Club, Chintamani: 165/8 in 41 overs (Md Saqlain 33; Sampath Kumar M 3-28, S Gaaurav 2-25, Amruth S 2-21).

FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Penalty punches in draw

Gyokeres, Alvarez on target as Atletico hit back to hold Arsenal in semifinal first leg

MADRID, AFP

Julian Alvarez's penalty secured Atletico Madrid a 1-1 draw against Arsenal in a nervy Champions League semifinal first leg clash on Wednesday.

Viktor Gyokeres sent the Premier League leaders ahead from the spot just before the interval after he was fouled, but Alvarez followed suit 10 minutes into the second half after Ben White's handball.

Arsenal were upset at a late penalty decision being overturned following a VAR review when David Hancko made contact with Eberechi Eze in the area.

Atletico had the better for long periods but Arsenal's solid defending helped them leave the Spanish capital in a good position to return to the Champions League final 20 years after their last appearance.

What the game lacked in the dizzying goal rush of Paris Saint-Germain's 5-4 win over Bayern Munich in the other semi-final the night before, it replaced with tension and a desperation not to fall behind.

Toilet paper rained down from the stands of the Metropolitano stadium minutes before kick-off, in a striking -- if wasteful -- display, which invited cynical jokes from some quarters about the calibre of the spectacle ahead.

In a tussle between arguably the continent's two biggest teams never to lay a finger on the trophy neither wanted to blink first.

Julian Alvarez's (centre) celebrates after scoring Atletico Madrid's equaliser in the first leg of the Champions League semifinal against Arsenal on Wednesday. REUTERS

Atletico still have an outdated defensive reputation but pinned Mikel Arteta's miserly Arsenal back in the early stages, with David Raya tipping Alvarez's shot around the post.

The Gunners, a long way from Arteta's eve-of-the-game demand they dominate proceedings, looked to smash and grab, with Marc Pubill blocking from Martin Odegaard on a quick breakaway.

Noni Madueke, starting on Arsenal's right flank with Bukayo Saka only fit for the bench, hammered just wide from distance as last year's beaten semi-finalists sporadically emerged from their half.

The next time they did, Gyokeres won a penalty. The Swedish striker, who might not have started if Kai Havertz was fit, exchanged passes with Martin Zubimendi and Hancko clumsily shoved him in the back from behind.

Diego Simeone and Atletico veteran Antoine Griezmann begged for the decision to be reviewed but VAR saw no reason to intervene.

Gyokeres took the spot-kick himself, walloping it past Jan Oblak, who dived the right way but stood no chance of keeping it out.

Three-time runners-up Atletico, back in the semi-finals for the first time in nine years, came out guns blazing in the second half.

Raya saved Ademola Lookman's drive with Gabriel blocking Griezmann's follow-up.

The hosts pulled level from the penalty spot after White handled Marcos Llorente's shot, the ball bouncing up and hitting his arm, which was away from his body.

Alvarez took it, and having missed in Atletico's Copa del Rey final shoot-out defeat earlier in April, this time made no mistake with an unforgiving blast rivalling Gyokeres's first-half effort.

MLS-bound Griezmann looped a shot off the crossbar and then sent the rebound off target as Atletico turned the screw in pursuit of an advantage to take into next Tuesday's second leg.

Result: Atletico Madrid: 1 (Alvarez 56th pen) drew with Arsenal: 1 (Gyokeres 44th pen).

Kothari urges for cue sports' inclusion in CWG

'Billiards, snooker have fantastic chance of winning medals'

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Hours after being crowned two-time Billiards World Champion, Sourav Kothari urged for inclusion of cue sports in the Commonwealth Games 2030, which is going to be hosted in Ahmedabad after India won the bid earlier this year.

41-year-old Kothari, who defeated compatriot and 17-time Billiards World Champion Pankaj Advani in a lopsided final in Carlow, Ireland, late on Tuesday evening, reminded that billiards and snooker have long been dominated by Indians, and their absence from multi-discipline events also hurts the country's medal count.

"I request you (media) to put in a word to mention this, that, you know, billiards and snooker have a fantastic chance of winning multiple medals at these events," said Kothari during an interaction facilitated by the Sports Authority of India.

"And I'm not just saying that on the basis of our level of play, but also backed by performances in the past in the Asian Games."

Sourav Kothari

Billiards, snooker and other cue events have been included in four consecutive Asiads since its debut in 1998 but was not considered from 2014 onwards due to financial constraints that forced the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) to remove multiple non-Olympic events. The sport, however, is all set for its return at the 2030 Asian Games.

Earlier in the four editions, India bagged 16 medals, including five gold, and is the third most successful nation behind China and Chinese Taipei.

"Being in the Olympics or Commonwealth or Asian Games changes the status of a sport completely... I think it will be great, not just for our sport, but also for India's medal tally if we are included in the Commonwealth Games. Efforts are already on by our Billiards and Snooker Federation of India but we need a little bit of push from SAI, from the ministry, from the media, so that we see this sport, which truly deserves its place in those multi-continental events," he said.

Kothari also believes there's a big opportunity for the sports to grow further in India as the younger generation has developed an interest in the cue sports, becoming popular through video games on smartphones.

"Whenever I'm out somewhere in public, I can see somebody or maybe somebody's phone is visible to me. If they're playing a game, chances are that it's snooker and pool. There is a huge amount of interest in people who want to learn this game. And I feel that the only way to tap into this energy is to make infrastructure," Kothari said.

SAI also sanctioned financial assistance for India's participation in the World Championships, including Kothari, Advani and coach Ashok Shandilya. SAI approved a total expenditure of approximately Rs 6.46 lakh under the Assistance to National Sports Federations (ANSFs) scheme.

Kickstart lose points to a late own goal

BENGALURU, DHNS: A late own goal by Aruna Bag (85th minute) cost Kickstart FC dearly as the Bengaluru-based club had to settle for a 1-1 draw against Nita FA in AIFF NaCoE in Kolkata on Thursday.

The own goal nullified a brilliant first-time volley by Kiran Pisda at the beginning of the second half (48th) as Kickstart took the lead against the run of play.

Kickstart, who looked further comfortable on the counter after taking the lead, were at fault for not doubling their lead.

The result continues to keep Kickstart in the drop zone of the eight-team league as they remain seventh with seven points in eight matches. They will face bottom-placed SESA next on May 3.

Result: Kickstart FC: 1 (Kiran Pisda 48th) drew with Nita FA: 1 (Aruna Bag 85th OG).

Winners at the Yonex-Sunrise Karnataka State U-11 & U-13 ranking badminton tournament pose with their spoils.

Vaibhav grabs grand double

BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru Urban's Vaibhav Rao Nandikolla and Shreeya A Rao clinched the U-13 boys' and girls' singles titles respectively at the Yonex-Sunrise Karnataka State U-11 & U-13 ranking badminton tournament here at Spark7sports Arena on Thursday.

In the boys' final, top seed Vaibhav produced a dominating display to defeat Gnan Rishik Boligarla in straight games 21-12, 21-11.

In the corresponding girls' final, Shreeya A Rao pulled off a come-from-behind victory over top seed Sihi Adarsh of Hassan in three games 17-21, 21-16, 21-7.

Vaibhav, later partnering Manvith Manibettu Adesh, defeated Guna Aaditya P and Pratham Sandeep Bayar 21-7, 21-15 to clinch the boys' U-13 doubles title for a double.

Results: (all finals, prefix denotes seedings) Boys: Singles: U-13: 1-Vaibhav Rao Nandikolla (Bengaluru Urban) bt Gnan Rishik Boligarla (Bengaluru Urban) 21-12, 21-11.
Doubles U-13: Manvith Manibettu Adesh/2-Vaibhav Rao Nandikolla (Bengaluru Urban) bt Guna Aaditya P/ Pratham Sandeep Bayar (Bengaluru Urban) 21-7, 21-15.
Singles U-11: 1-Reyansh Rishik Sai Yaganti (Bengaluru Rural) bt Atharva Sahoo (Bengaluru Rural) 21-11, 21-15.
Doubles U-11: Atharva Sahoo/Reyansh Rishik Sai Yaganti (Bengaluru Rural) bt Nihaan Mandanna/ 3-Saathvik Sridhar Reddy (Bengaluru Urban) 21-15, 21-12
Girls: Singles: U-13: Shreeya A Rao (Bengaluru Urban) bt 1-Sihi Adarsh (Hassan) 17-21, 21-16, 21-7.
Doubles: Shaanvi PN/ Shambhavi Sharma (Dakshina Kannada) bt Hanvittha KA/ 2-Stuthi S Shetty (Bengaluru Rural) 21-11, 21-18.
U-11 singles: 1-Jyotsna Vinod (Bengaluru Urban) bt Krupasya Amitha Reddy R (Bengaluru Urban) 21-7, 21-7.
Doubles: Shanaya VS/Yuvika Thamaya (Kodagu) bt Jyotsna Vinod/3-Krisha Singhadeo (Bengaluru Urban) 21-19, 16-21, 22-20.

Shubhang, Suhas guide Cambridge CC home

BENGALURU, DHNS: Shubhang Hegde and Suhas R scored bristering half-centuries as Cambridge Cricket Club posted a comfortable 83-run victory over Whirlwind Cricketers in the KSCA T20 League-cum-knockout tournament for G Kasturirangan Memorial Trophy here.

Batting first and riding on Shubhang's (90 runs off 46 balls) and Suhas (85 off 45) contributions, Cambridge CC piled up 229/4 in their 20 overs.

Whirlwind Cricketers, in their reply, were restricted to a meagre146/6 in 20 overs. Eesa Hakeem Puthige was the pick of the bowlers, returning with figures of 2/19.

Brief scores: Cambridge Cricket Club: 229/4 in 20 overs (Toufeeq S 38, Suhas R 85, Shubhang Hegde 90; Nagaraj Hegde 2-52) bt Whirlwind Cricketers: 146/6 in 20 overs (Pranav Raj 45, Banesh SP 32; Eesa Hakeem Puthige 2/19).
Vijaya Cricket Club, Malur: 142/5 in 20 overs (Vijay KA 54) lt to Palar Sports Club, Kolar: 143/1 in 13.3 overs (Ritesh Bhatkal 69, Chiranth D 30 n.o., Sudhanwa U Kulkarni 40 n.o.)
South End Sports Club: 156/6 in 16 overs (Shashank BK 41, Stalin Hoover 32, Yathish 30; Swaroop 3-22, Nikhil 2-16) bt Young Lions Club: 145/9 in 16 overs (Dheeraj Kumar Yadav 40, Swaroop 27; Manu N 3-29, Vikas Gowda S 3-20) (Start of the match was delayed due to overnight rain, and was later reduced to 16 overs).
Minerva Cricket Club: 181/7 in 20 overs (Anish KN 66, Arush Jain 44; Darshan M B 3-35, Chukka Naga Santhosh Pavan 2-25) lt to Mount Joy Cricket Club: 182/9 in 20 overs (Amogh R Shetty 49; Kushal Gouda 4-25).
The Bangalore Cricketers: 164/6 in 20 overs (Saurav P Samant 82; Deepak Devadiga 3-18) lt to Bangalore United Cricket Club (1): 169/4 in 18.2 overs (Akash Shetty 44, Shashindra K 31, Rahul Vernekar 25, Lavish Kaushal 32 n.o.; Abhiraj HR 2-31).
Herons Cricket Club: 191/6 in 20 overs (Prajwal Pavan 43, Sanjay Ashwin C 42, Dheeraj Mohan 45 n.o.; Santhosh S 2-41, Tejas KA 2-36) lt to Rajajinagar Cricketers: 191/7 in 19.2 overs (Sireesh Balgaar 32, Nihal Ullal 25, Raghuveer 31; Jayanth MR 2-36, Jullian Jacob Edward 3-22) via VJD method (Match was interrupted by rains and no further play was possible).
Social Cricketers: 105 all out in 14.4 overs (Lochan S Gowda 27; Saideep HJ 2-18, Dhruv Vasu 2-8, Ronak Yelwal 4-5) lt to Friends Union Cricket Club (1): 109/5 in 14.4 overs (Sidharth Akhil 41, Anmol Mathur 2-24).
Jayanagar Cricketers: 191/8 in 20 overs (S Chaitanya 66, Sourab Muttur 50, Suhas Purushotham 29 n.o.; Vivek Naik 2-31, Pranesh Desai 2-33, Rohan M Yareshmi 2-26) bt Dooravani Cricketers (1): 169/7 in 20.0 overs (Aarav Shriyan 45, Rohan M Yareshmi 32, Darun L Reddy 25, Vineeth B 32 n.o.; Suhas Purushotham 2-33, Avinash D 2-20).

RWFSA emerge champions

BENGALURU, DHNS

A brisk unbeaten half-century by Jasper EJ and all-round show by Akshay CK, Rail Wheel Factory Sports Association defeated Canara Bank in the final to win the KSCA Group II, I Division league-cum-knockout tournament here at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Batting first, RWF posted a competitive 182/7 in 20 overs with Jasper blasting a 51-ball 93 not out which included seven fours and five sixes.

Akshay contributed a handy 43 to propel Rail Wheel Factiry total.

Akshay then returned to claim three for 12 as Canara Bank crashed to a paltry 132 in 19.1 overs. Syed Khaja (3/11) and Manvanth Kumar L (2/17) lent ideal support as Krishav Somasundar's 56 for RWF proved too little.

Rail Wheel Factory Sports Association, winners of the KSCA Group II, I Division league-cum-knockout tournament. STANDING (from left): Kruthik Krishna, Manvanth Kumar L, Cheluvaraj V, Manjunath SP, Manjesh Reddy, Pranesh Desai, Rohan A Patil, Pradeep T, Sagar Solanki, Jasper EJ, Akshay CK, Shashikumar K, Manoj, SK Moinuddin, Swaroop, Samanth, Brijesh. SITTING: Praveen Pawar (coach), Shoaib Manager (captain), Shuja Mohamood (vice-president, RWFSA), Ganesh, Sandeep Hebbar (manager), Prasanna Patil Kulkarni.

Brief scores (final, at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium): Rail Wheel Factory Sports Association: 182/7 in 20 overs (Sagar Solanki 28, Jasper EJ 93 n.o., Akshay CK 43; Naveen MG 2-37, Lavish Kaushal 2-46) bt Canara Bank: 132 all out in 19.1 overs (Krishav Somasundar 56; Manvanth Kumar L 2-17, Akshay CK 3-12, Syed Khaja Moinuddin 3-11).

Government of Karnataka
Office of the, Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Ballari
No.PWD/EE/Bly/TS-4/503/2026-27 Date : 29.04.2026

Short term Tender Notification

The Executive Engineer, Public works Department Division, Ballari invites the tenders for the works detailed in the table from the eligible contractors registered in Karnataka Public Works Department, through Karnataka Public Procurement portal (KPP). Two cover tender procedure as per KTPP Act shall be followed. The tender documents can be downloaded from the web-site https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. For any additional information the tenderers may contact the office of the undersigned during office working hours.

Note : For any changes either in tender dates or any other conditions or if recalled, tenderers can view in KPP portal. Separate notification in this regard will not be published.

TABLE

Sl No	Details of Work	Estimate Cost (Rs.in Lakhs)
	4059-SCSP and TSP Grants :	
1)	PWD/2026-27/RD/WORK_INDENT35703	495.65

The Tender Events are as under:
1)Last dates for queries (through KPP portal): **05-05-2026 upto 12.00 Hours**
2)Last date for submission of tenders through KPP portal: **11-05-2026 upto 16.00 Hours**
3)Date and time of opening of Technical Bids.: **12-05-2026 at 16.30 Hours**

DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/104

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
PWD Division, Ballari.

VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAM LIMITED
(Government of karnataka Enterprise)
Office of the Executive Engineer, Yettinahole Project Division No 4, Madhugiri. Tumkur Dist-572132,
Ph: 08137- 282112 E-mail: eeyetmadhugiri4@gmail.com
No:EE/VJNL/YHP/Div-no,4/Madhugiri/NIT-02/2026-27 Date: 23.04.2026 & NIT-03/2026-27 Date : 24.04.2026

Tender Notification (Through KPP-Portal)

On Behalf of Managing Director, Visvesvaraya Jala Nigama Limited, Bangalore the Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri, Karnataka invites two tender document system for 01 work of Srinivasapura Constituency and 03 works of Gowribidanuru Constituency, total of 04 works amount Rs.41.91 Lakhs to Rs.422.79 Lakhs on "Percentage basis" through KPP-Portal. The contractor's can download and submit the completed bid documents through KPP-procurement website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in as per the dates mentioned below.

Sl No.	Calendar of Events	Dates for NIT-02/26-27 Date: 23.04.2026	Dates for NIT-03/26-27 ate:23.04.2026
a	The Contractor can have access to the e-tender document, i.e. the Tender Schedules, bid documents and other documents in the web site https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal- home on payment of transaction fee (non-refundable) from	27.04.2026 to 11.05.2026 up to 5.00 PM	28.04.2026 to 12.05.2026up to 5.00 PM
b	The Last date of Submission of completed Tender Documents through KPP-portal.	11.05.2026 up to 5.00 PM	12.05.2026 up to 5.00 PM
c	Last date & time for tender Queries / Clarifications	04.05.2026 up to 3.00 PM	04.05.2026 up to 3.00 PM
d	Pre-Bid Meeting at office of the Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri.	—	04.05.2026 at 11.00 AM
e	Date & Time of Opening of Technical by Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri.	13.05.2026 at 11.00 AM	14.05.2026 at 11.00 AM
f.	Date & Time of Opening of Financial bid by Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division No.4, Madhugiri.	After Approval of Technical Bid	After Approval of Technical Bid

The undersigned reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons.

Sd/-Executive Engineer,
VJNL, YHP Division No.4,Madhugiri.

DIPR/TUM/42/KSMCA/2026-27

IPL 2026

10 TEAMS 13 VENUES 58 DAYS 74 MATCHES

> He (Sooryavanshi) has a number of world-class bowlers in this tournament going through plan A, plan B, plan C, plan E, F, and G against him.
>
> **IAN BISHOP, EX-CRICKETER TURNED COMMENTATOR**

Muttiah Muralitharan

Spinners are not looking to turn the ball: Muralitharan

MUMBAI, PTI: Sri Lankan spin legend Muttiah Muralitharan believes spinners in the Indian Premier League are not looking to turn the ball as they have not developed the skills since young age and it is not possible to develop the art during the tournament.

Muralitharan said spinners nowadays do not develop the art of spinning the ball and making batters think as their focus remains on containing with variations.

"(The) domestic level (cricket) has also been like this for spinners. When we played cricket, as a spinner, you have to turn the ball - that is your first objective. Nowadays, it's not the key because everyone is not looking at (playing) Test cricket. They are looking to play one-day cricket," Muralitharan told reporters here on Wednesday after Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Mumbai Indians by six wickets.

"Even at a young age, they only try to bowl quicker, vary (the deliveries) and not try to spin it. Because they are not getting that ability from the younger days, they can't come (at the age of) 19s and 18s and try to spin the ball because their muscle memories are already there in place.

Challengers undone by GT bowling masterclass

Gill & Co. make light work of chase despite late troubles

AHMEDABAD, PTI

Jason Holder was immense on the night, taking two wickets and three catches. Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler then backed his all-round prowess with handy cameos as Gujarat Titans sealed a nervy four-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in an IPL match here on Thursday.

Holder's two-wicket burst (2/29) and those sharp catches helped the Titans bowl out defending champions RCB for a modest 155 in 19.2 overs. But with Gill (43, 18b), Buttler (39, 19) and later Rahul Tewatia (27 not out, 17b) leading the charge, GT ended up at 158 for six in 15.5 overs.

RCB remained second in the table with 12 points, and GT too was static on fifth but added two valuable points to swell their tally to 10 after this game.

After the early departure of Sai Sudharsan, the Titans' charge to victory started with Gill's uncharacteristically aggressive knock of 43 off 18 balls (4x4, 3x6).

Taking on the new-ball attack, Gill hammered Bhuvneshwar Kumar for a four and a six before going after Josh Hazlewood, tearing into the Australian with three fours and two sixes in a 24-run over as GT raced to 36 without loss in just two overs.

On the other hand, Buttler, who was dropped on 1 by stumper Jitesh Sharma off Hazlewood, made RCB pay instantly. He scooped the very next ball cleanly for a six over fine leg and never looked back.

Buttler finished the powerplay in style with a four and a six as GT surged to 69 for 2.

He continued the charge after the field spread, smashing spinner Suyash Sharma for back-to-back sixes -- one straight down the ground and another sliced over long-off -- in a 17-run over.

But Gill fell to Bhuvneshwar as his powerful punch found Kohli inside the circle. The veteran pacer soon struck to jettison Buttler to cap a fine spell.

In the process, Bhuvneshwar reached 352 wickets, becoming only the second Indian bowler after Yuzvendra Chahal (391) to cross the 350-wicket mark in T20s.

Walking in at 111 for five in 10.3 overs, Holder gave a semblance of stability, launching a first-ball six off compatriot Romario Shepherd.

With the required rate never climbing beyond four an over, Holder and Tewatia kept it simple, before the Windies all-rounder got out for 12.

But Tewatia held his nerves to seal the chase as GT registered back-to-back wins.

Earlier, returning to the venue where they had lifted the title last season, RCB were cruising at a run rate in excess of 10 with Kohli leading the charge, smashing Kagiso Rabada for 21 runs in his opening over which included five fours in a row.

But Gill persisted with his strike bowler and the call paid off handsomely.

Rabada (1/38) struck back to remove Kohli for a blazing 28 off 13 balls, triggering a collapse as RCB lost wickets in a cluster through the middle phase.

Left-arm pacer Arshad Khan wrapped the tail and returned with 3/22.

From a strong 71/2 after seven overs, RCB slipped to 96/6 in 10.3 overs, losing Rajat Patidar (19), Jitesh Sharma (1), Tim David (9) and Krunal Pandya (4).

However, RCB stuck to their all-out attacking template despite the slide, something that seemed to have denied them 20-30 extra runs.

Gujarat Titans' Shubman Gill (left) and Rashid Khan made crucial contributions in four-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday. PTI

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU: Jacob Bethell c Rashid b Siraj 5, Virat Kohli c Rashid b Rabada 28, Devdutt Padikkal b Rashid 40, Rajat Patidar c Holder b Arshad 19, Jitesh Sharma c Buttler b Holder 1, Tim David c Holder b Rashid 9, Krunal Pandya c Holder b Arshad 4, Romario Shepherd c Sudharsan b Holder 17, Venkatesh Iyer c Sudharsan b Arshad 12, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 15, Josh Hazlewood run out 0. Extras (LB-3 W-2) 5. **TOTAL (all out, 19.2 overs) 155.**

Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-35, 3-79, 4-80, 5-91, 6-96, 7-126, 8-126, 9-155.

Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 4-0-38-1, Kagiso Rabada 4-0-44-1, Jason Holder 4-0-29-2, Arshad Khan 3.2-0-22-3, Rashid Khan 4-0-19-2.

GUJARAT TITANS: Sai Sudharsan c Sharma b Bhuvneshwar 6, Shubman Gill c Kohli b Bhuvneshwar 43, Jos Buttler b Bhuvneshwar 39, Washington Sundar lbw b Shepherd 12, M Shahrukh Khan c Hazlewood b Shepherd 8, Rahul Tewatia (not out) 27, Jason Holder c Padikkal b Suyash 12, Rashid Khan (not out) 7. Extras (W-4) 4. **TOTAL (for 6 wkts, 15.5 overs) 158.**

Fall of wickets: 1-42, 2-57, 3-92, 4-109, 5-111, 6-141.

Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-28-3, Josh Hazlewood 4-0-56-0, Suyash Sharma 3.5-0-44-1, Romario Shepherd 4-0-30-2.

Result: GT won by 4 wkts

PoM: Jason Holder

RCB's next match: Vs LSG (May 7, Lucknow)

Let's cut a little slack for Bumrah: Pollard

MUMBAI, PTI: A fast bowling genius like Jasprit Bumrah is entitled to have an off day or not have a good season, said Mumbai Indians' batting coach Kieron Pollard, appealing to cut some slack for the Indian pace spearhead who delivered his third most expensive spell in the Indian Premier League.

Kieron Pollard

Going wicketless once again, Bumrah was hammered for 54 runs in four overs by Sunrisers Hyderabad en route to their six-wicket win on Wednesday night.

After Mumbai Indians stroked their way to their best-ever first-innings score of 243/5 riding on Ryan Rickelton's 123 not out, SRH came out all guns blazing to make 249/4 in 18.4 overs.

"When a cricketer is not doing well, we look at every single aspect as to why he's not doing well and there is no difference to Jasprit Bumrah," Pollard told reporters when asked about several factors around Bumrah's bowling in this IPL including lack of pace.

"He has done this for years. As a human being, you're entitled as well to make mistakes, not have a good day, not have a good season, not have a good couple months. I just feel that we need to sometimes remember the good things that he has done."

'We don't have much option this season'

MUMBAI, PTI: Skipper Hardik Pandya admitted that his bowling resources are stretched but stressed the need to find solutions under pressure.

"I think this season we don't have much option, we really need to see what all differences we can do. I won't put my bowlers under the bus. I think as an overall unit, we have not been able to do what exactly Mumbai Indians stands for," said Pandya when asked how he plans to address his bowling attack after the bowlers failed to defend a total of 243.

"We really need to see what all we need to work on."

The Mumbai Indians skipper said that with the continued backing of the franchise owners and support staff, the team will find a way out.

"We have passionate owners and support staff, hopefully we will figure out something."

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	NR	Pts	NRR
Punjab Kings	8	6	1	1	13	1.043
Royal Challengers	9	6	3	0	12	1.420
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	6	3	0	12	0.832
Rajasthan Royals	9	6	3	0	12	0.617
Gujarat Titans	9	5	4	0	10	-0.192
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.121
Delhi Capitals	8	3	5	0	6	-1.060
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	2	5	1	5	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	8	2	6	0	4	-0.784
Lucknow Super Giants	8	2	6	0	4	-1.106

RR's Parag fined for vaping incident

NEW DELHI, PTI: Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag was on Thursday fined 25 per cent of his match fee for bringing the game into "disrepute" after being caught vaping on camera during the IPL game against Punjab Kings in Mullanpur.

Parag's actions during the Royals' chase on Tuesday night drew condemnation on social media.

It's learned that on field umpires Tanmay Srivastava and Nitin Menon had not reported the matter to match referee Amit Sharma right after the game. They only did that after seeing visual proof and Sharma found Parag guilty for a code of conduct breach as per the IPL guidelines.

The Level 1 offence carries 25 per cent deduction from match fees and one demerit point.

Will Starc turn up for embattled Capitals?

Delhi desperate to bounce back after two humiliating defeats in a row

JAIPUR, PTI

Delhi Capitals have little time to dwell on what has been a bruising stretch of results as they gear up to face a confident Rajasthan Royals in their Indian Premier League match here on Friday.

LIVE 7.30 PM

It has been a difficult run for the Axar Patel-led side this season. They have swung between extremes in the last two games. From posting a 250-plus total only to concede a world-record chase, to being bowled out for 75 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Add to that a one-run defeat against Gujarat Titans earlier this month, and Delhi have had their share of emotionally damaging results. With three wins and four losses, they are seventh on the table and need a turnaround soon.

Delhi's biggest concern has been their inconsistent batting. While the likes of KL Rahul, David Miller, Tristan Stubbs and Sameer Rizvi have all contributed in patches, the unit has failed to click collectively.

In the last match, Abhishek Porel's knock as an Impact Player was one of the few positives, helping the team avoid a record-low total and the team management will be tempted to give him a go in the playing XI.

There is some good news on the bowling front. Pace ace Mitchell Starc is set to return after getting clearance from Cricket Australia to play from May 1. With Lungi Ngidi still unavailable, Starc's inclusion comes as a timely boost. He is likely to replace either Kyle Jamieson or Dushmantha Chameera.

Delhi's bowlers couldn't do much while defending 75 in the previous game, but they will need to be sharper against a strong Rajasthan batting line-up.

Their top order has been aggressive, with fearless Vaibhav Sooryavanshi taking on world-class bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins from the outset and Yashasvi Jaiswal showing good touch. The fourth-placed Royals, in contrast, come into this match with confidence. They recently handed Punjab Kings their first defeat of the season, which was their sixth win in nine games.

Another positive for Rajasthan is the middle order finding form after a slow start. That gives them more balance and makes them harder to contain across the innings. Against a Delhi attack that has been under pressure, Rajasthan will back themselves to continue their momentum.

For Delhi, the focus is clear. The batters need to put together a complete performance instead of relying on individual efforts. The bowlers, with Starc back, must find ways to control the scoring, especially against an attacking top order.

Mitchell Starc's inclusion in the squad comes as a timely boost but the pacer remains uncertain for the match. AFP FILE PHOTO

Blockx ends Ruud's title defence

MADRID, AFP: Up-and-coming Belgian Alexander Blockx ended the title defence of Casper Ruud by defeating the former world No. 2 6-4, 6-4 to reach the Madrid Open semifinals on Thursday.

Blockx, 21, who broke into the top 100 for the first time last month and is at a career-high 69 in the world, has knocked out four consecutive seeds, including third-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime, en route to the final four.

Blockx is through to his first tour-level semifinal and is the first Belgian man in tournament history to make it this far at the Madrid Open.

Prior to this month, he had never played a tour-level match on clay. He now enters the semifinals with a 10-2 mark on the red dirt through qualifying and main draw matches at ATP level.

"To be honest, I don't know, I'm just happy being here," said Blockx.

Dipak-coached Abbas latest from South Asian heritage to represent New Zealand

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

South Asian communities are among the fastest-growing and largest migrant groups in Australia and New Zealand. And organically, cricket tends to be the sport these people gravitate towards at a young age.

Over the years, New Zealand Cricket has been a direct beneficiary of this development, and for a country which is not blessed with a large talent pool (5.3 million population approx) and money ($37 million as total NZC reserves for FY25) and ($26.9 million in funding), they have found ways to tap into these talents.

Dipak Patel was the trailblazer for the sub-continental players who aspired to play for the Black Caps. Since the off-spinner, Jeetan Patel, Jeet Raval, Tarun Nethula, Ronnie Hira, Ish Sodhi, Ajaz Patel, Rachin Ravindra and Adithya Ashok have gone onto represent the country at the highest level.

Muhammad Abbas set a world record for the fastest ODI fifty for a debutant. X

Lahore-born Muhammad Abbas, son of Pakistani first-class cricketer Azhar, has been the latest entrant, having earned a national cap in March 2025. He also set a new world record for the fastest ODI fifty on debut in 24 balls.

"New Zealand Cricket is very fair to all," Abbas starts off.

"I wouldn't say it would be specifically to South Asian or anyone, but I think my personal experience growing in this environment has been very fair. It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from, you're given an equal chance."

The 22-year-old Abbas, who was included in the NZC pathway programme at 16, said that the feeling of being "valued" by the coaches, team-mates and the organisation (NZC) has helped him grow as a cricketer and individual.

"I was valued just as anyone else would be. The bigger question was what were your skills and what you brought to the table. I think if you bring something good, NZC is there to support you and help you grow."

Abbas has nothing but gratitude for Dipak who coached him and the one who had opened doors for many like Rachin, Aditya, Ajaz among others.

"He (Dipak) was my high school coach for the first XI and he has had huge impact on my game. He's a very straightforward person and I really appreciated that. He definitely pushed me to push my limits the ways he thought was right and a huge credit to him for developing my game in those five years."

IPL hopes

When asked if there was an IPL franchise he would like to play for in the future, Abbas said that he has not given much thought about it.

"I like quite a few teams. The likes of Mumbai (Indians) is pretty awesome. Even Kolkata (Knight Riders) sounds very cool. But I am not too sure, I've followed it but I have never thought of myself in any of those teams."

"However, it has been awesome to see the tournament, especially youngsters like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. He is one hell of a talent."

Fans can catch the live action of Bangladesh vs New Zealand on FanCode.

India face Chinese Taipei in quarters

HORSENS, PTI

India will aim to stay on course for a second title when they face a formidable Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals of the Thomas Cup Finals here on Friday.

Four years ago, India achieved an unprecedented feat by clinching the Thomas Cup crown -- the world team championship of badminton -- bringing the sport firmly into focus among the country's youth.

This time, India progressed to the quarterfinals after finishing second in Group A and will face Chinese Taipei, who are yet to win the title.

India made a strong start to their campaign with a 4-1 win over Canada, followed by a 5-0 sweep of Australia, before going down 2-3 to China despite a spirited effort.

Chinese Taipei is also a formidable side, led by world No. 6 Chou Tien Chen. Alongside him, world No. 8 and reigning All England champion Lin Chun-Yi and world No. 21 Chi Yu Jen add depth to their singles line-up.

India will bank on Ayush Shetty for a favourable result in the quarters. AFP

In doubles, the Taiwanese side boasts of the world No. 14 pair of Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin, and world No. 16 duo of Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan.

India, on the other hand, have looked in good touch, with both singles and doubles combinations performing well.

Young Ayush Shetty has carried forward his form from the Badminton Asia Championships, where he finished runner-up.

Narrun, Daiwik star in PPC's victory

BENGALURU, DHNS: Narrun and Daiwik bagged a rich haul of points (21 and 19 points respectively) in PPC's close victory over MNK Rao Park BC 60-55 during the final league matches of the State Sub-junior (U-13) boys and girls' championships for the BS Narayan Memorial Trophy here at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium on Thursday.

LOCAL BASKETBALL

Results: Final League matches: Boys: PPC 60 (Narrun 21, Daiwik 19, Dhawan 10) bt MNK Rao Park BC: 55 (Shreshta 14, Padmanabhan 13, Yansh 13) HT: 24-28; Bangalore Vanguards: 61 (Chayank 19, Neil 11) bt Beagles BC: 45 (Advait 15) HT: 38-15; Vimanapura SC: 57 (Rakshith 18, Nirvair Vir 13, Taksha 12) bt Bangalore Vanguards 30 (Chayank 10) HT: 29-18; MCHS: 56 (Shashvath 13, Divit 12) bt PPC 42 (Daiwik 19, Dhawan 15) HT: 24-21.
Girls: Mounts Club 71: (Kenisha 19, Devishi 12, Antara 12) bt Young Orion's SC: 22 (Aisiri 5) HT: 47-11; MCHS: 36 (Swarali 14) bt Vivek's SC: 31 (Anantha 11, Pahal 11) HT: 22-14; Beagles BC: 26 (Ayra 12) bt Young Orion's SC: 15 (Samara 4) HT: 12-9; Bangalore Vanguards: 61 (Aarushi 23, Harshada 15) bt MCHS: 53 (Akshaya 15, Swarali 15, Kanira 11) HT: 26-21.

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